

ANIMATION WORLD

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Animation Festivals

History by
Bruno Edera

Musings of Annecy's
Jean-Luc Xiberras



John R. Dilworth on
Beavis and Butt-head
Do America

Giannalberto
Bendazzi on
The Blue Arrow

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1 Cover: *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*. © 1996 MTV Networks.



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

by Harvey Deneroff

Festival Matters

Today's international animation festivals traditionally started in 1960 in Annecy, France; the same time and place also saw the birth of L'Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (ASIFA), the international animators organization which now serves as the sanctioning body for the major festivals.

It is important to remember that both organizations were conceived and nurtured in a world where animation was largely a marginal activity vis-à-vis the film and television industries. For instance, in the United States, the glory days of Hollywood's Golden Age were mostly past, with the spectacle of inexpensive, Saturday morning animation threatening to take the *raison d'être* of animation as we knew it away.

But animation of a different sort was starting to appear around the world. Not content to produce pale imitations of Disney, a small but significant number of individuals and studios went their own ways. It was the works of these individuals and studios that found their home in festivals like Annecy and often dominated ASIFA on both an international and local level.

Today, animation is no longer a marginal activity. In the commercial world, it is fast being absorbed into the mainstream of the global entertainment industry. As such, animation is growing at a pace and breadth unheard of before. A part of this expansion is due to animation riding the coattails of a worldwide boom in film and television that has resulted from an increas-



ing number of movie theaters and television outlets (both terrestrial and satellite); another part is due to the increasing popularity of animation, ranging from theatrical features to video games.

Some veteran observers warn of the disastrous consequences if one or more of the new feature animation operations that the Hollywood studios are building in the Disney mold collapses. However, it seems unlikely that such an event will necessarily be catastrophic. After all, the American industry survived when NBC stopped programming Saturday morning animation in 1992 without a whimper, and looks to do the same when CBS follows suit later this year.

If the market for Disney-style musical extravaganzas diminishes (as it has to a certain degree over the past few years), there is little reason not to believe that other genres will not come to the fore. After all, *Toy Story*, *Space Jam* and *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* are all basically straight comedies; in addition, the surprising success at the

box office of the *Beavis and Butt-head* film gives the lie to the assumption that only animated features aimed at a family audience can make money. And as the following statistics that the National Association of Television Program Executives (NATPE) proclaims, in advertising for its 1st Annual Animation & Special Effects Expo, the animation industry is a lot broader than ever. To wit, they note that:

"The Digital Visual Effects business [which uses animation technology and talent] is doubling every year. Computer Video Games account for \$1 billion in sales each year. Animation Production and Distribution for television is growing at upwards of 500-900% per year. With CD-ROM capabilities, 3-D and 2-D Character Animation is becoming a multi-billion dollar market. Roughly half of the movies released in 1995 utilized digital visuals of some sort, while 90% used digitally recorded sound. This contrasts with "maybe" 10% for each category in 1993. . . . Animated Feature Film grosses exceed \$2 billion over the past ten years. \$17.22 billion in US revenues are generated by sale of entertainment merchandise [implying that much of it is animation-related]."

As animation becomes an integral part of the film and video industries, its destiny becomes increasingly integrated into the entertainment industry as a whole—subject to the same ups and downs, rather than going its own course. Thus, while the current boom will certainly end one day, that does not



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mean that the bubble will burst as it did in the US at the start of World War II or when animated commercials lost their enormous popularity at the end of the 1950s. All this has had and will continue to have its effect on festivals and ASIFA.

As noted elsewhere in this issue, festivals are getting away from their innocent beginnings as havens for personal animation and independent-minded filmmakers. While attempting to continue this tradition, commercial interests continue to "trample" on

this hallowed ground. Studios (large and small) and networks now look to them as prime venues to recruit talent and find new ideas. Talent which once went into making independent films now come to festivals looking for work. This has indeed changed, to varying degrees, the very nature of the way festivals are run and financed. It has also changed ASIFA's membership. (For example, ASIFA-Hollywood, the organization's largest chapter, has seen its once strong base among fans dwindle, while at the same time its professional ranks have increased exponentially.)

The days when major festivals will be content to hew to a biannual schedule, lest they compete with other events appears to be ending. If Annecy does go to an annual schedule, will Zagreb, Stuttgart and Hiroshima be far behind?

NATPE's Animation & Special Effects Expo is scheduled for this May, in Los Angeles, the same month as Annecy. Though such conflicts would, at one time, have been disastrous for one or the other

organization, this need not be the case anymore.

In addition, this March, Animation Magazine is reviving the Los Angeles Animation Celebration as part of its new World Animation Celebration. The festival, which was once a rather modest affair before it was suspended a few

years back, will now be part of what looks to be an annual three-ring, Hollywood extravaganza; among other events, it will include

an independently produced animation technology exposition, as well as an expanded version of ASIFA-Hollywood's Opportunities Expo, that will include a series of Animation Industry Seminars run by Women in Animation!

Interestingly, ASIFA-Hollywood was approached by both NATPE and Animation Magazine to have its Opportunities Expo be part of their respective events. One of the reasons ASIFA-Hollywood decided to seriously consider these proposals was the fear that one or both of these organizations would start its own job fair instead. As a member of ASIFA-Hollywood's board of directors at the time, I really did not think any such thing would really come to pass, but it was not an idea that I could entirely ignore.

In the same way, festivals (and ASIFA) will have to continue to face up and adapt to a rapidly changing set of circumstances, circumstances which may or may not threaten to alter their essence or mission in life.

—Harvey Deneroff



Animation Festivals:

A Brief History

by Bruno Edera



Bruno Edera

Among the factors for recognizing the richness and variety of animation film, there is one which, over the years, has progressively become more essential, and that is the animation festival. Today they exist all over the world, hundreds of them, but their history is relatively recent in the history of cinema—even if the art of animation preceded the invention of cinema.

As a historian and as a producer and programmer for television, I have had the chance to follow these manifestations since their

beginning in the 1960s; and I thank Annick Teninge for having asked me to write about festivals, because it has given me an opportunity for reflection which I might not have taken otherwise. The following lines are my own personal opinions, coming from the short and spontaneous reflections of the old "festival rat" that I have been for some 40 years, haunting the dark theaters of the frame-by-frame and their side-bars, for animation to me is a feast that I love to partake of. A feast that exists thanks to directors, filmmakers, writers, producers, artists and technicians of all types, whose work you generally only get to see for the first time at festivals, sharing it with an audience, and communicating with the filmmakers. It's important for an eager audience to see films on a large screen, for more and more the screens are small television sets, since many channels carry programs about animation festivals.

Furthermore, there are few creative areas for which (as happens with animation) you can see (even if selection juries have become indispensable), every year, even several times a year, the most recent films by

filmmakers from around the world.

To be able to participate in an animation festival is a great privilege, which inspires in me, more and more, a deep respect for those who make films, but also for those who make the effort to show them at these venues: these rendezvous of animation professionals with part of their public, the press, television, future festivals, film clubs, potential commercial deals, critics and historians, but also their admirers and friends—that is, their family.

Annecy has become an event where it is impossible to see everything, where one must make drastic choices between festival, marketplace, retrospectives, expositions, etc.

There are also certain critical moments: the opening ceremonies, the presentation of your work, waiting for the public reaction right after the screening of your work, the inevitable discussion "over lunch", and the agonizing moments (for all filmmakers, but also for the "neutral" participants) waiting for the

prizes to be announced—the moment when gazes are fixed on the future—moments of intense joy for some and cruel disillusion for others.

Animation to me is a feast that I love to partake of. A feast that exists thanks to directors, filmmakers, writers, producers, artists and technicians of all types, whose work you generally only get to see for the first time at festivals.

Now you can discriminate between festivals: some are rich and well-endowed—and they generally know how to let you know it; others largely compensate for what they lack financially by a generous welcome, by the quality of the audiences, their determination to show their approval or disapproval, whatever they feel, quite aside from the prizes given. There are a limitless number of criteria for judging a festival, but as far as I'm concerned, for all the festivals that I was able to attend (and that adds up to quite a few), I always went with the idea of "What new things can I do and see?" (pretentiously, I believe I've seen everything . . .); and every time I leave with new references both for my historian notebooks and my list of items that I'd like to acquire for Swiss Television.

Animation festivals, as far as I'm concerned, are a vital element in my activities; and I'm always happy when I have a chance to tell someone who

wants to see films, "Then go to such-and-such festival, where you can see the wonderful realm of animation in all its forms."

Sometimes you hear people say that there are too many festivals. That's perhaps partially true, since filmmakers often don't have enough prints of their films to participate in all of them. But I think that the increasing number of festivals is a delightful sign of the seductive power of animation. Every viewer—whether at a grand international festival or a little local one, anywhere in the world—who goes to see animation pays homage to the filmmakers, who have invested so much in their work and usually only enjoy a very brief "communion" with their audience. The word "communion" suggests a religion, and one could well associate animation with a sort of religion: those who make the films do so with a monastic dedication, their meanings are generally at the level of a "universal conscience"—in a very short time they are able to release an emotional reflection—and they go to a festival as one goes to

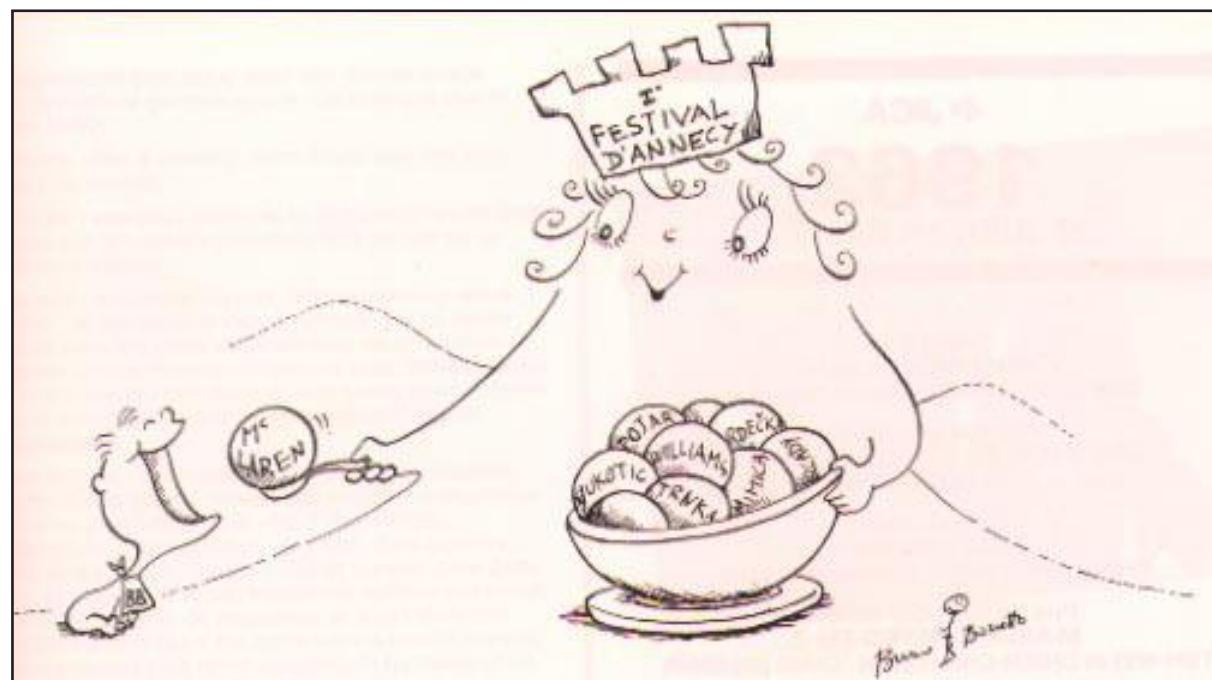
church, with the hope of seeing a rosary of good things.

An Attempt at Historical Background

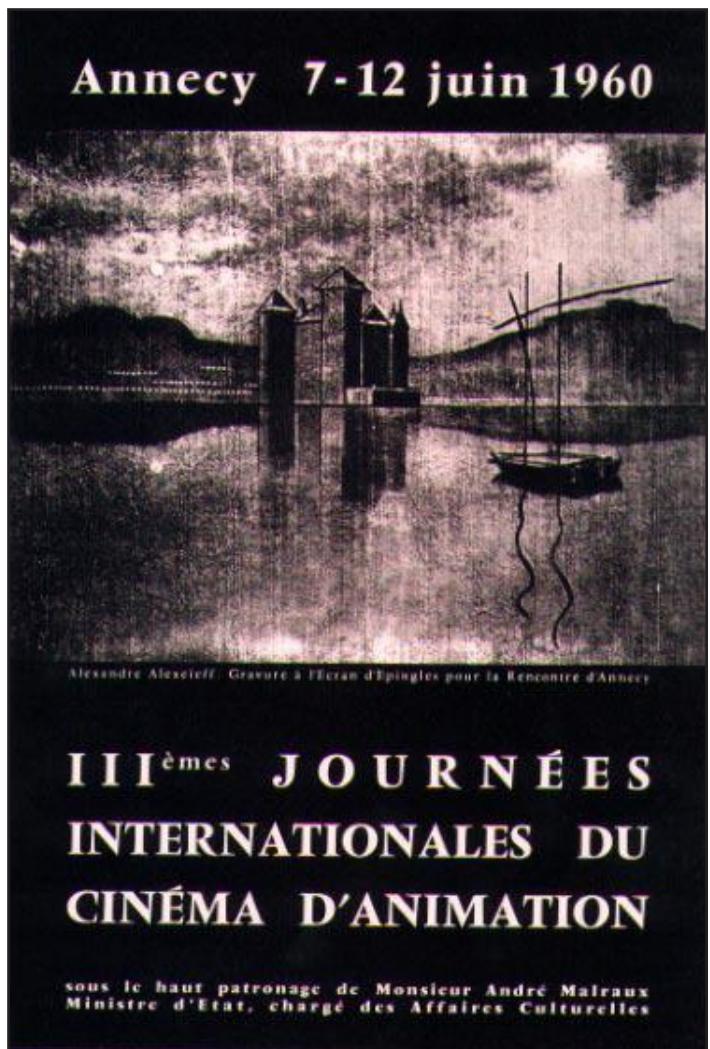
The history of animation festivals goes back farther than is generally thought; in effect (and as far as this is not contested) to 1946, at the time of the first Cannes Film Festival, when the initial manifestation (at least in France) is mentioned in an article by one J. Dieterle on page 73 of *French Film* No. 172, as "The First International Festival of Animated Films."

We have not forgotten that by 1946, Oscars had given yearly for some time to animated films in the United States; but these were "professional" awards that cannot really pertain to festivals, so we have not considered them—as they lack the very thing that is essential to festivals: interaction between the products and the makers on one hand and on the other the essential factor that determines their value, namely "the public."

In 1954, the "Club Gente de Cinema" [Society of Cinema Club]



Drawing by Bruno Bozzetto for the 1st Annecy Festival



Poster of the 1st JICA in Annecy 1960.

of Buenos Aires showed an important program of international animation in Argentina. Another festival took place in that city in 1961.

We haven't taken the trouble before this to research sources or references prior to these, being content at our modest personal level to be interested above all in French references noted as "probable beginnings" of festival activities dedicated to frame-by-frame. This let us find a single page printed during the 8th Cannes Festival, dated May 6, 1955, bearing the title *Homage to the Pioneers of Animation*, announcing the manifestation organized during the following festival, and which, as far as we know, was the beginning of the now-worldwide movement for the recognition of the importance of the animated

film through interposed festivals.

The Birth of JICA

During the 9th Cannes Festival from April 26 to May 4, 1956, largely due to the work of André Martin and Pierre Barbin, "The First International Animation Days" [JICA] took place. A hundred films from all over the world were screened, but it wasn't yet a "festival" in the true sense of the word as we know it now; however, it aroused considerable interest among festivalgoers and animation professionals in having a second JICA take place at Cannes in 1958.

Make a Film For Annecy

By 1960, some people worked to get JICA its own wings, so it would no longer be dependent on Cannes. At Annecy, there was a nationally-famous film society, and it was there that JICA found a new site to hold its festival. At the same time, a number of filmmakers and promoters of animation films had put together an International Association of Animated Film [ASIFA], which was still rather familial at this point. At the beginning, we remember, the Annecy Festival took place on the even-numbered years: 1960, 1962—then starting in 1963 on the odd-numbered years. There was no festival in 1969 [a year of political turmoil in France], so the 1997 Annecy Festival will be

the 19th (or the 21st, counting the first two JICAs). (For a time, there was also a RICA [International Animation Conference] at Annecy on the even numbered years when the festival was not held.)

The Annecy Festival is known throughout the world, and is without doubt the most important: It's the only one about which filmmakers will say, "I'm making a film for Annecy."

For those who have followed it from the early days, Annecy has undergone a great change: it has become an event where it is impossible to see everything, where one must make drastic choices between festival, marketplace, retrospectives, expositions, etc.

And Elsewhere?

To preserve a sort of chronological timeline, we have focused on Annecy which began in 1960 at the same time as ASIFA. We will now cover other festivals that arose by each decade..

During the first decade of Annecy, the 1960s, a number of other festivals sprang up and died, but this list is not necessarily exhaustive:

- A festival took place in Peking in 1960 or 1961.
- In 1965, during the 8th Biennale of São Paulo, there was an International Animation Festival, but only recently has another Brazilian animation festival, Anima Mundi, taken place..
- In Tokyo, in 1965, an International Animation Festival took place at the Sogetsu Arts Center.
- The First Festival of Animated Film took place at Los Angeles in 1965, [which evolved in a touring program called the International Tournée of

Animation.]

- In 1966, the first International Animation Festival was held at Mamaia in Rumania. It would be held in the even numbered years between Annecy three times: 1966, 1968 and 1970. Films were screened in an open-air theater on the banks of the Black Sea, which gave it a very special atmosphere.
- In 1967, as part of the Montreal Expo worlds fair, a unique World Retrospective of the Animated Cinema took place. It included a competition for films under one minute on the topic "The World of People," for which some 100 titles were submitted.
- In 1968, the Cambridge Animation Festival was born. It was non-competitive, and the current Cardiff Festival is its descendant. That same year, the London Festival included an animation section.
- In 1969, a festival was started in Lucca, Italy, but unfortunately it no longer exists.

During the 1970s, a number of international manifestations did not add much to our knowledge, but a few were important.

- In 1970, the first Conference of Abano Terme in Italy.
- When Mamaia ceased to exist after 1970, Zagreb took over as a showplace for Eastern Europe; despite various political turmoils, Zagreb has continued to hold its biennial festival in even years since 1972—and it is still the main alternative to Annecy.
- New York held festivals in 1973,

1974 and 1975.

- In 1976, the only still extant North American festival appeared: Ottawa (which was held in two other Canadian cities, but is back



home again, each even year).

- Finally, in 1979 the Varna Festival started; this Bulgarian event has been discontinued, but is supposed to be held again soon. Varna was very colorful and was also held on the banks of the Black Sea.

It is impossible to list all the many events that occurred during the 1980s, so I will only cite those that aroused international attention.

- Since 1982 Stuttgart, biennial.
- Since 1976, Espinho in Portugal, annual.
- KROK, a festival that takes place on board ship (e.g., sailing down the River Don), will have its fourth event in 1997.
- Shanghai, a biennial event that

was only held in 1990 and 1992.

- Hiroshima, biennial from 1984.

There are also a number of regional or national festivals which have acquired an international following, including three in France (Marly-le-Roi, Bourg-en-Bresse and Rennes), the Bulgarian Tolbouckine, and the Swiss Soleures.

Among the documents I have at hand, there are also mentions of a Chicago 1980, a Genk 1981, a Tokyo 1987, and a Utrecht 1987. And this does not count short film festivals with a strong animation category, such as Clermont-Ferrand,

Leipzig, Dresden, or Viper in Lucern, Switzerland.

I have a list of a 100 other names, issues and considerations about festivals, but they will have to wait for another article!

Translated by William Moritz

Bruno Edera is a producer/programmer for Télévision Suisse Romande (TSR) and a animation historian. He has published works on a wide variety of topics, including African cinema and eroticism and animated films. He has also served on the juries of a number of animation festivals, including Espinho, Lucca, and Zagreb, as well as serving on the selection committees of such events as Varna, Geneve-Computer Animation and Annecy.

Festivals de Films d'Animation

par Bruno Edera



Bruno Edera

Parmi les facteurs de reconnaissance de la richesse et de la variété du film d'animation, il en est un qui, au fur et à mesure des années, est devenu essentiel, c'est celui des festivals. Il en existe actuellement plusieurs centaines à travers le monde, mais, paradoxalement, leur histoire est relativement récente dans l'histoire du cinéma, même si l'art de l'animation a précédé l'invention du cinématographe.

Ayant personnellement deux qualifications dans ce domaine, celle d'historien d'une part, et de programmateur-producteur de télévision d'autre part, j'ai eu la chance

de pouvoir suivre de telles manifestations dès le début des années soixante, et je remercie Annick Teninge de m'avoir demandé mon opinion sur les festivals ; cela m'a donné l'occasion d'une réflexion que je n'aurais jamais faite autrement. Les lignes ci-dessous reflètent un avis personnel, issu d'une réflexion courte et spontanée du vieux "rat de festivals" que je suis depuis une quarantaine d'années, hantant les salles obscures de l'image par image.

L'animation est pour moi comme une gourmandise que j'aime à faire partager ; gourmandise qui existe grâce à des auteurs, réalisateurs, producteurs, artistes et techniciens de toutes tendances, mais que l'on apprécie généralement en première vision que lors de festivals, en tous cas en ce qui me concerne, car il y a partage avec le public, et communication avec les créateurs. C'est vrai aussi pour le public, avide de productions cinématographiques qui se présentent sur grand écran et, de plus en plus, sur les écrans de télévision, car plusieurs chaînes proposent aujourd'hui des émissions sur les festivals.

De plus, il est peu de domaines de la création où, comme dans le

film d'animation, on puisse voir — même si des jurys de sélection sont maintenant devenus indispensables — chaque année, et même plusieurs fois par année, la plus récente production de films d'auteurs du monde entier. Pouvoir participer à un festival de films d'animation est un grand privilège qui m'inspire de plus en plus profondément le respect de ceux qui font les films, mais aussi de ceux qui font l'effort de les montrer ; un festival est le rendez-vous des professionnels de l'animation avec leur public, la presse, la télévision, les ciné-clubs, les acquéreurs potentiels de droits, la critique et l'historiographie ; mais aussi les admirateurs et les amis, voire la famille.

C'est aussi un certain nombre de moments critiques : l'inauguration de la manifestation, la présentation de son oeuvre, l'attente des réactions du public immédiatement après une projection, l'éventuelle discussion "de bistrot", et, moment certainement angoissant pour tout créateur, mais aussi pour les participants "neutres", l'attente du palmarès ; moment où les regards se fixent vers l'avenir; moment d'intense joie chez certains, de cruelle désillusion chez d'autres.

On pourrait faire des discriminations entre festivals ; ceux qui sont riches et bien dotés — généralement ils savent le montrer ; d'autres ont largement compensé le manque de moyens par un accueil exceptionnel — la qualité des publics, leur détermination à manifester ou non leur approbation ou désapprobation, ce qui se sent par exemple lors de la lecture du palmarès. On pourrait ainsi se répandre sur un nombre illimité de critères de jugement en rapport avec un festival ; en ce qui me concerne à chaque festival auquel j'ai la possibilité d'assister, et cela commence à en faire un bon nombre, je viens maintenant toujours avec l'idée "Qu'est-ce que je vais bien pouvoir y trouver de nouveau" (prétentieusement je crois avoir tout vu...) et chaque fois j'en repars avec de nouvelles références aussi bien sur mon carnet de notes d'historien, que sur mon futur carnet de commandes pour les émissions que la TSR (Television Suisse Romande) présente régulièrement.

Le festival de films d'animation est un moment vital dans mes activités, et je suis très heureux quand j'ai l'occasion de dire à quelqu'un qui voudrait voir des films : "Allez donc à tel ou tel festival, c'est là que vous verrez ce qu'est ce monde merveilleux de l'animation, sous toutes ses formes".

On entend parfois dire qu'il y a trop de festivals, c'est peut-être partiellement vrai lorsque l'on sait que tous les réalisateurs ne possèdent pas suffisam-

ment de copies pour participer à tous ; pour ma part je pense que tant qu'il s'en créera de nouveaux, c'est un signe réjouissant de l'attrait que l'animation peut susciter. Chaque spectateur qui, à travers le monde, va à un festival voir des films d'animation — du festival international jusqu'au festival familial local — rend hommage à des créatrices et créateurs qui s'investissent énormément dans leurs œuvres et n'ont parfois qu'une trop brève "communion" avec le public. Le mot communion peut faire songer à une religion, mais on peut associer l'animation à une sorte de religion ; ceux qui font les films font un travail de bénédiction ; leurs messages se situent généralement au niveau d'une conscience universelle ; ils parviennent à déclencher une réflexion émotionnelle dans une très courte durée, et l'on va dans un festival comme on va à l'église, avec l'espérance que l'on verra un chapelet de bonnes choses.

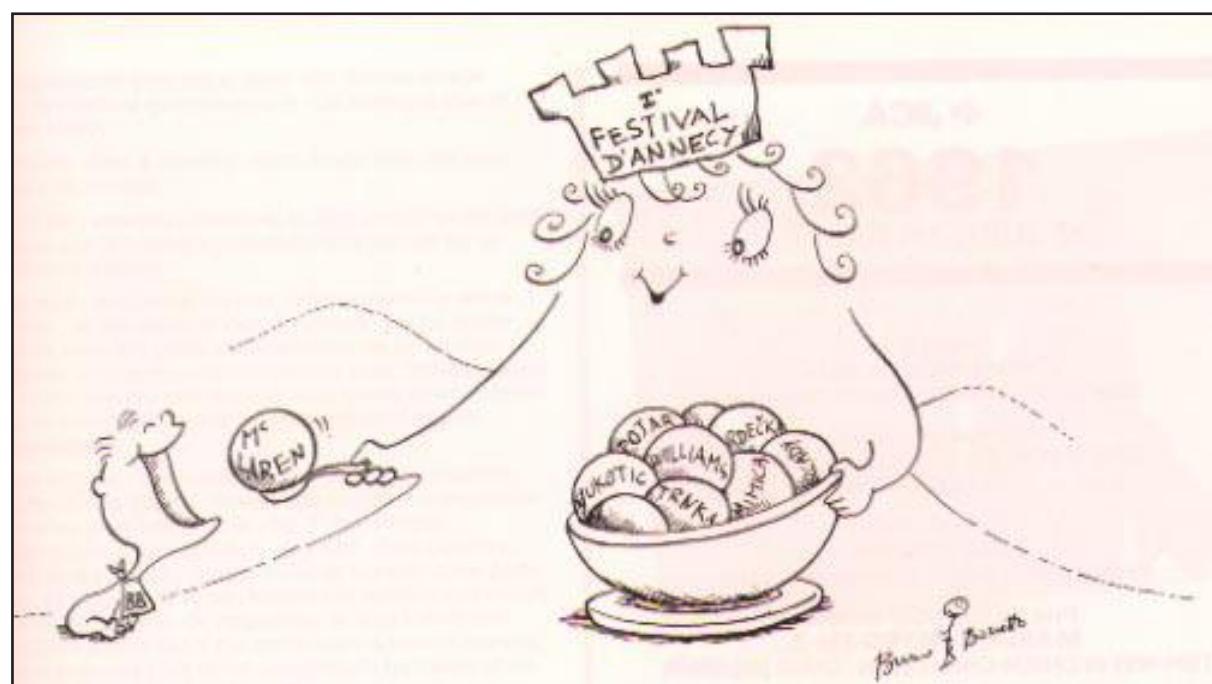
Une Tentative de Situation Historique

L'histoire des festivals de films

d'animation est peut-être plus ancienne qu'on le pense généralement ; en effet et pour autant que cela ne souffre pas de contestation, c'est en 1946, lors du premier Festival de Cannes qu'une première manifestation, plus particulièrement française est citée ; puis Le Film Français — numéro spécial no. 172 — mentionne en page 73 "le premier festival international de dessins animés sous la forme d'un article signé J. Diterle.

On n'oubliera pas, cependant de rappeler que, à ce moment-là, depuis plusieurs années, des Oscar de l'animation étaient déjà attribués aux Etats-Unis ; mais comme le cadre n'en était que professionnel, on ne peut pas assimiler ces manifestations à des festivals et nous n'en tiendrons pas compte ici. Ce qui caractérise un festival, c'est la rencontre des films, des réalisateurs avec l'élément essentiel qui en détermine leur valeur, c'est à dire le public.

En 1954 le Club Gente de Cinema de Buenos Aires, en Argentine a montré une importante programmation de films d'animation internationaux ; un autre festi-



Dessin de Bruno Bozzetto pour le premier festival d'Annecy

Annecy 7-12 juin 1960

Alexandre Alexeieff. Gravure à l'écran d'épingles pour la Rencontre d'Annecy

III^{èmes} JOURNÉES INTERNATIONALES DU CINÉMA D'ANIMATION

sous le haut patronage de Monsieur André Malraux
Ministre d'Etat, chargé des Affaires Culturelles

Affiche des premiers JICA à Annecy en 1960.

val a également eu lieu dans cette ville en 1961.

Nous n'avons pas pris la peine, jusqu'ici, de rechercher plus antérieurement des sources ou références, nous contentant, à notre modeste niveau de nous intéresser plutôt aux références francaises comme "débuts probables" des activités de festivals dédiés à l'image par image. Ceci nous a permis de trouver un simple feuillet daté du 6 mai 1955 et édité lors du 8e Festival de Cannes, portant pour titre: "Hommage aux pionniers du film d'animation", qui annonçait la manifestation organisée lors du festival suivant et qui, à notre connaissance, fut à la base du mouvement maintenant parfaitement planétaire de la reconnaissance, par festival interposé, de l'importance du film d'an-

imation dans le monde.

Naissance des JICA

Lors du 9e Festival International du Film de Cannes, en 1956, eurent lieu, entre le 26 avril et le 4 mai, les premières Journées Internationales du Cinéma d'Animation (JICA) organisées par l'Association Française pour la Diffusion du Cinéma, sous l'impulsion notamment de Pierre Barbin et André Martin. Une centaine de films provenant du monde entier y furent présentés ; ce n'était pas encore un Festival au vrai sens du terme

comme on le conçoit maintenant, mais cette initiative a suscité beaucoup d'intérêt parmi les festivaliers et les professionnels de l'animation, après qu'une seconde édition des J.I.C.A. se soit déroulée à Cannes en 1958.

Faire un Film Pour Annecy

En 1960, quelques personnes ont travaillé pour que les JICA volent de leurs propres ailes et ne dépendent plus du festival de Cannes ; il y avait alors à Annecy un ciné-club d'importance nationale et c'est ainsi que les JICA y ont trouvé un nouvel endroit pour se dérouler ; parallèlement, plusieurs réalisateurs et promoteurs de l'animation ont mis sur pied une Association Internationale du Film d'Animation [ASIFA], dans ce contexte alors

encore quelque peu familial. On se souviendra que le festival avait lieu, au début, les années paires : 1960, 1962, puis les années impaires à partir de 1963, et qu'il n'y en eut pas en 1969. Ainsi celui de 1997 sera le 21ème.

Connu dans le monde entier, le festival d'Annecy est le plus important, l'incontournable, peut-être le seul au sujet duquel des réalisateurs disent "je fais un film pour Annecy". Pour les festivaliers qui le suivent depuis les débuts, il y a eu un très grand changement ; c'est devenu une manifestation où il est impossible de tout voir, où un choix s'impose de façon drastique entre Festival, Marché, Retrospectives, Expositions etc. Durant une période, il y eut aussi, les années sans festival, des Rencontres Internationales du Cinéma d'Animation [les dernières eurent lieu en 1990, conjointement avec la célébration du 30e anniversaire du festival].

Et Ailleurs?

Pour conserver un élément de comparaison chronologique, on se situe, généralement, par rapport au festival d'Annecy, ce qui est pratique notamment parce que sa première édition (1960) concorde avec la naissance de l'Association Internationale du Film d'Animation, et que l'on peut établir des situations par tranches de dix ans. Durant la première décennie "post-annécienne", on note la naissance, parfois aussi la cessation, de quelques festivals ou manifestations, sans que la liste donnée ici soit exhaustive.

Il y eut, en Chine, un festival à Pékin, en 1960 ou 61. En 1965, lors de la 8ème Biennale de São Paulo, au Brésil a été organisé un premier festival international de cinéma d'animation ; or on sait qu'il y a actuelle-

ment de nouveau un festival au Brésil [Anima Mundi] ; un autre Festival International du Cinéma d'Animation a eu lieu la même année au Centre Artistique Sogetsu de Tokyo.

"The First festival of Animated Film" s'est déroulé à Los Angeles en 1965.

En 1966 se crée le festival international du film d'animation de Mamaia, en Roumanie, en alternance avec Annecy; il y eut 3 éditions, en 1966, 1968 et 1970. Il offrait la particularité de se dérouler dans un cinéma de plein air, au bord de la Mer Noire, ce qui lui conférait une atmosphère toute spéciale.

1967 est l'occasion d'une manifestation unique dans le cadre de l'Expo de Montréal "The World Retrospective of the Animated Cinema" au cours de laquelle, entre autres, il y eut l'organisation d'un concours spécial : les réalisateurs ont pu proposer des réalisations sur le thème "Terre des Hommes", d'une durée fixée à 50 secondes; une centaine de films participèrent au concours.

En 1968 naît le festival de Cambridge, qui était non compétitif, et dont l'actuel Cardiff est la suite. La même année, dans le cadre du London Festival, naît une section Animation.

En 1969 naît le festival de Lucca, en Italie, qui n'existe malheureusement plus.

Durant la période 1970 à 1979, le nombre de manifestations internationales n'augmenta pas de beaucoup à notre connaissance, mais certaines d'entre elles sont devenues importantes. 1970 a vu

une première Rencontre d'Abano Terme, en Italie ; Mamaia ayant cessé en 1970, il fut, en quelque sorte, remplacé, dès 1972, par Zagreb qui, lui, dure encore malgré une situation difficile — qui n'a rien à voir avec l'animation — et continue d'être un rendez-vous biennal

d e

en vrac, que ceux que je connais ou qui ont une réputation internationale : dès 1982 : Stuttgart, biennal ; Krok, festival qui se déroule sur un bateau et dont ce sera la quatrième édition en 1997; Shanghai, Hiroshima; et une quantité d'autres, aussi bien internationaux que nationaux ou même régionaux, parmi lesquels : Marly-le-Roi (national, France); Bourg-en-Bresse (films pour la jeunesse, France); Rennes (France); Tolbouckine (national, Bulgarie) ; Soleures (national, Suisse).

Dans la documentation que je possède, sont encore mentionnés : en 1980, Chicago ; en 1981, Genk ; en 1987, Tokyo ; en 1987, Utrecht ; sans compter les festivals de courts métrages avec une section animation du type Clermont-Ferrand (France), Leipzig et Dresden (Allemagne), etc.

J'ai encore une centaine de noms, idées et considérations personnelles, mais cela devra faire l'objet d'un autre article...



choix. 1973, 1974 et 1975 sont les années où il y eut un festival à New York. Dès 1976 Espinho au Portugal, annuel, festival de fin de saison ; toujours en 1976, c'est l'apparition du seul festival sur continent américain qui existe encore : Ottawa, qui s'est un peu déplacé à travers le Canada avant d'y revenir il y a peu. Enfin, en 1979, c'est l'apparition du Festival de Varna (Bulgarie) qui n'existe plus non plus, mais qui devrait, nous a-t-on dit, renaître bientôt; c'est également un festival "marin" puisque situé au bord de la Mer Noire.

Pour la période de 1980 à 1989, il n'est plus possible d'établir une liste, tellement le nombre de manifestations a augmenté, je ne citerai,

Bruno Edera est producteur/programmateur à la Télévision Suisse Romande (TSR) et historien du cinéma d'animation. Il a publié différents ouvrages sur le cinéma d'animation (cinéma africain, érotisme et dessin animé). Il a notamment été membre du Jury des Festivals d'Espinho, Lucca et Zagreb et membre des comités de sélection des festivals de Varna, Geneve-Computer Animation, and Annecy.

The Changing Face of Festivals

by Tom Knott

Festivals devoted to animation have been around for over 35 years. The first major one was held in Annecy, France in 1960. It was started by a group of French film enthusiasts and attracted such animation pioneers as John Hubley, Karel Zeman and Norman McLaren. Annecy has since grown and grown to the point where it is currently the biggest animation event in the world, attracting thousands of people and hundreds of films. A few years after Annecy started, other festivals joined the circuit—Mamaia, Varna, Zagreb, Ottawa, Hiroshima, Stuttgart, and a number of others. Some of these are still in existence, some aren't.

Festivals are a good place in which new and established talent can be recruited.

I attended my first festival in 1982 in Ottawa. At that time I was working for the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, which handled animation among other types of film. In 1984 the Festival moved to Toronto, which I also attended. That's when I started to get excited about animation and animation festivals. With animation anything that can be imagined can be created and animation festivals are the evidence of this. I also real-

ized that, unlike most live-action events, animation festivals presented a unique opportunity to talk to animation artists, most of whom turned out to be very approachable. For instance, at the '84 festival, I spent two hours talking with Bill Scott of *Rocky and Bullwinkle* fame about writing for animation. This is a moment I still treasure.

In 1986 the Festival moved again, this time to Hamilton, just south of Toronto. The organizers were looking for volunteers so I enlisted. Shortly after that I was hired on full-time and ended up doing most of the programming. The Hamilton Festival had a really rough time and indeed the Festival in Canada had a rocky ride for the most of the 1980s. The board of directors fired the director a month before the festival and it was up to the staff to run the festival with some help from the board. And unfortunately the money ran out before the festival started, so it basically ran on fumes. However, I did get a taste for programming and again met some great people, such as Czech filmmaker Karel Zeman (and saw every one of his marvelous features).

In 1988, the Canadian Film Institute brought the Festival back to Ottawa. The CFI had ran the Festival from its inception in 1976 to 1984. They were looking for a

deputy director, I met with them and they offered me the job. The director at that time was Frank Taylor, who helped revive the festival. He was the director in 1988 and



1990, a post I took over for 1992 and 1994. In between the Ottawa Festivals, which are held every other year, I worked on the second, third and fourth Los Angeles International Animation Celebrations.

In the States, many of the opportunities for realizing income [from independent films] have disappeared. Plus many filmmakers are now devoted parents and have different, more important priorities.

A Decline in Quality

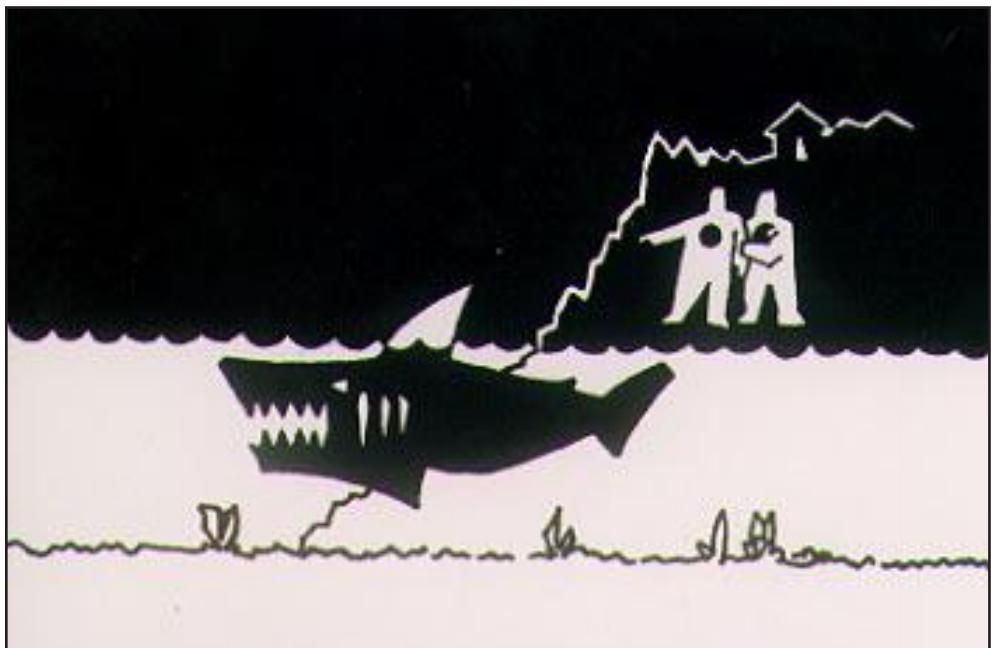
Over the past few years, I've noticed a decline in the quality of films entered in competition at festivals. The 1980s and early 1990s were a high period, quality-wise.

You had the influence of Norman McLaren, the Hubleys, Jules Engles, as well as the National Film Board of Canada, Zagreb and European schools of animation on a whole generation of filmmakers. The NFB itself was at its peak in both the French and English Animation Studios. Across town you had Frédéric Back creating masterpieces at Radio Canada.

In Eastern Europe, in the communist run countries—the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia—you had state run animation studios which created many great films.

In the States you had opportunities to realize some revenue from independent animation films, from the touring shows—the International Tournée of Animation, Spike & Mike's Festival of Animation—and MTV's *Liquid Television*. MTV was also commissioning station IDs from independent animators, which put cash in animators' pockets.

Much of this has now changed. Many of the now formerly communist countries closed or privatized their studios. In Canada, the NFB has faced severe budget cuts. And in the States, many of the opportunities for realizing income have dis-



The Shark's Fin by William Lebeda

appeared. Plus many filmmakers are now devoted parents and have different, more important priorities. This has resulted in many animation filmmakers no longer having the opportunity or time to create.

There has been an increase in the number of schools offering animation programs, but few of these are concentrating on teaching animation as filmmaking.

Bright Spots, But . . .

There are still a number of bright spots. In the UK, Channel Four and the BBC have continued commissioning great films from studios like Aardman. Some veteran filmmakers, like Joanna Priestly and Bill Plympton, are still creating

wonderful films. And there is a new generation of filmmakers coming up.

Unfortunately, for the festival circuit, many of the new generation are entering the studio world and not creating their own films. There was an article in a recent issue in *Variety* stating the animation industry is gobbling up many of the independent animators. Most of the independents I know are not working in the industry, though some are working in small commercials houses. It's the students that are choosing to go the studio route instead of the filmmaker route. There has been an increase in the number of schools offering animation programs, but few of these are concentrating on teaching animation as filmmaking.

The commercial animation studios have also had an impact on some festivals. It used to be that the big studios didn't enter animation festivals. Companies like Kurtz & Friends did, but Disney or Warner Bros. did not. Now they do. This is a good thing, as it shows the breadth of what animation can do. After all, festivals are showcases for the best animation.



Tale About the Cat and the Moon by Pedro Serrazina

Many festivals have also come to rely on much needed funding from the major studios. Usually these contributions come with increased involvement from these companies, which can result in a festival having a more commercial feel.

Right now, Annecy is the only festival with a strong market—MIFA, which has been held for the last several years. There are people who attend Annecy just for the market. It's more of a market for selling prod-



Waiting For the Moonrise (Studio Lotus)

uct, especially to European television. Many of the participants are also looking for ideas and projects. There are also vendors selling technology—ink & paint systems, CG software, etc. With the growth spurred by the European Union and the increased numbers of terrestrial and satellite TV stations, there is a large market for animation in Europe that MIFA caters to.

Annecy does try to keep a balance between animation as art and the commerce of animation, but

sometimes business seems to take over.

Festivals can be of value to the major animation studios. As many of the feature studios are looking for talent, festivals are a good place in which new and established talent can be recruited. You never know when or where you are going to come across talent. Also, television companies like Nickelodeon and the Cartoon Network come looking for ideas.

The Future

As for the future, Annecy will certainly remain the main animation festival. They have talked about going yearly, at least as far as the market goes. If this happens then there would be some impact on the other festivals. Right now, you have Annecy in the odd numbered years and Ottawa, Hiroshima, Zagreb, Stuttgart and Holland in the even numbered years.

There are several new festivals like Cartoons On The Bay. But these cater to the commercial world and their impact would be more on markets such as MIFA or MIPCOM. The Los Angeles International Animation Celebration is also being revived as the World Animation Celebration in Pasadena this March.

Secure funding of festivals is key to the survival of festivals. In a country like Canada, raising money for the arts is getting harder. The government is cutting back on direct arts funding and, in some cases, making it more difficult, tax-break wise, to raise money from the busi-

ness community. The Ottawa Festival may have a more difficult time fundraising, but it has survived for 20 years through many ups and downs and will continue to survive. Other festivals which rely on governmental aid may also experience similar problems.

Many of the larger animation studios are providing some funding to festivals. But studios are fickle beasts and in the future it may be a case of having to do more with less.

I realized that, unlike most live-action events, animation festivals presented a unique opportunity to talk to animation artists, most of whom turned out to be very approachable.

Fortunately, there is still a community that wants to see and support animation. And most importantly all the festival directors have strong commitment and passion to the art form, and are doing all they can to insure their festival's survival.

Tom Knott worked for the Ottawa International Animation Festival from 1988 to 1995 and on the Second, Third and Fourth Los Angeles International Animation Celebrations. He has also acted as a consultant to Colossal Pictures, MTV, the Voyager Company and Expanded Entertainment. He currently works for Warner Bros. Feature Animation in Los Angeles.

Rendezvous In Annecy: An Interview With Jean-Luc Xiberras

by Annick Teninge



Jean-Luc Xiberras
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

Jean-Luc Xiberras has been director of Annecy, the oldest and perhaps the most prestigious of all animation festivals, for 14 years. The festival has long been a pacesetter for the others that followed. For example, it was the first to institute a market. It has also been rumored that it will be held annually (all the major festivals are now held every other year). To find out exactly what's happening about this and other matters, I decided to ask him a few questions about both Annecy and himself.

What is your background?

I began my professional career in the 1960s as an organizer and director for various cultural associations. My job involved arranging all sorts of arts events for the general public. In the 1970s, I became involved with an even larger organization, which enabled me to orga-

nize a whole range of live shows and set up one of the first avant-garde entertainment venues in the alternative arts scene outside Paris—in Haute-Savoie, France, where I arranged screening of films by little-known directors such as Saura, Fassbinder, Wenders and Cassavetes. Then, in the late 70s, I was able to create a special theater for the performing arts (music, theater and dance), attracting international groups such as The Living Theater and the Bread and Puppet troop, as well as worldwide touring operas such as Peter Brook's production of *Carmen*.

What was the state of the festival when you first came to Annecy in 1982 and what were the important changes you made?

When I started as general manager, I found myself placed rather suddenly in the thick of things, as preparations for the 1983 festival were well under way. However, I was instantly able to take full advantage of the facilities offered by the new Bonlieu Cultural Center, which replaced the old Casino Theater as the festival's new official venue.

In 1981, the festival attracted between 300-400 film profes-

als. This was an enormous figure for animation at the time. It is important to realize just how small everything was in those days. There was only one movie theater with only one competition screening per day, complemented by a small number of retrospectives and only one exhibition.

If the number of professionals attending Annecy has gone from 340 in 1981 to an estimated 5,000 for 1997, the same can be said for the number of films submitted for competition.

Over the years, Annecy had carved out a special niche for itself as a haven for personal animation,



Cannes 1958: Norman McLaren, Joy Batchelor, Paul Grimault, John Halas
Courtesy of Annecy Festival



Softimage booth at the MIFA

Courtesy of Annecy Festival

which were invariably short films. Also, first and foremost, it was a venue where animators could meet each other in a relaxed atmosphere over a glass of beer in a street café.

The festival itself was organized from an office in Paris in conjunction with the local film society (one of the biggest in France with between 4,000 and 5,000 members). However, the festival board decided to change things and look to the future—the competition category was extended and the organizational headquarters switched to Annecy.

It's interesting to look at what Pierre Jacquier, the president of the festival board, said at the time to realize the full scope of the changes that were taking place "The Film Society and its members were still working as hard as they had always done and the organizers in Paris were still doing their job as well as ever. Yet it was the environment that was changing. I'm talking about audience expectations, the whole scale of production and distribution. The festival was running very smoothly but we were going round in circles. It was becoming a kind of stopgap or refuge for the personal animation film and rather academic. It was missing out on the new developments in animation and new types of cinematography. New

technology and the new economic situation were passing it by." The changes, however, were not to everybody's liking and the animation community in France was deeply divided. This was the atmosphere that I came across when I moved into the hot seat.

At the beginning, I had no real knowledge of animation. However, I immediately sensed that we had to increase the number of movie theaters and use the cultural facilities available in Annecy to full effect. In 1983, films were shown in six different cinemas and the number of competition screenings was increased threefold. I also wanted to make the Annecy Festival more festive and add to the number of tributes, retrospectives (8-9) and exhibitions (4-5). To my own surprise the number of professionals attending Annecy shot up to 1,300. I felt that we had met the challenge and it was time to move in a big way.

The idea now was to integrate all animation techniques, including the much maligned new technologies, into the competition segment. We also began to work on the idea of a film market for an industry that didn't even exist at the time.

Why did you decide to create a market? Was it an economic necessity and were you a pioneer in doing this?

It was started in 1983. Many people smiled and shook their heads when I mentioned the idea—they thought it was too Utopian.

What happened at the time was that

filmmakers would come to Annecy and show their films, but everything stopped there. We tried out a prototype film market in the exhibition hall next to the Bonlieu movie theater. It was pretty much an improvised and informal affair—trestle tables and a few companies selling animation materials (basically pens and gouache) together with a few valiant producers who wanted to meet the filmmakers attending Annecy. However, it enabled us to create the first MIFA [Marché international du film d'animation] market in 1985 with real booths, a 500 square meter exhibition area and a raft of companies who were prepared to take the plunge with us. In setting this up, we were lucky to have backing from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who developed the Image Plan to promote the animation industry. The animation scene did the rest—exhibitors were mainly from France, with a few from the rest of Europe. There were very few TV producers present, as the market was dominated by Japan and the US.

Since then, both the market and the festival have never stopped growing. For example, in 1987 we were forced to extend the MIFA



Outside view of the MIFA
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

exhibition area to a marquee in the garden area of the Bonlieu Center; then in 1989 MIFA moved to a 2,000 square meter tent on park land in front of the lake, before finding its current home in the Imperial Palace Conference Center in 1991. In 1995, the

tent was expanded to 3,000 square meters to meet the growing demand from the US majors. Not that MIFA stops there—it encompasses all of the other conference rooms and salons in the conference center itself.

I can understand why so many people all over the world are trying to create thematic film markets for animation—we've been doing it for 10 years now and have seen how so many things have taken off.

How else has the festival grown and changed over the years?

As might be expected, it has changed with the times. In 1985, I felt that it was necessary to consider TV series, advertising and commissioned films for competition. This, in turn, highlighted the need to set up different selection committees for different genres, which we did in 1985, although the competition itself remained open to all categories.

Our next step was to arrange for specific screenings according to genre—shorts, features, TV productions, commissioned films—but we still kept the notion of only one international jury. In view of the incredible difficulty involved in switching from one type of production to another, we thought it was wiser to set up two different international juries, which we did in 1993. Since then, there have been separate prizes for specific genres but only one grand prix.

This worked well in 1993, when both juries agreed on the ultimate



A view of the MIFA
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

prize winner; but in 1995 we ended up with two joint-winners, because one jury was pitted against the other. As a result, we decided to modify the rules of the 1997 festival to make sure that each genre would have its own grand prix and other awards. That's the way things seemed to have worked out and will probably be for the foreseeable future.

If the number of professionals attending Annecy has gone from 340 in 1981 to an estimated 5,000 for 1997, the same can be said for the number of films submitted for competition. Animation certainly seems to be riding on the crest of a wave. We have gone from 350 films entered in Annecy 83 to a staggering 1,236 in 1995, with a big question mark for 1997. That's an average increase of 200 new films for each new edition.

In the middle of all this we felt that it was important to discover and highlight new talent. For this reason, we decided to create a special student and graduation film prize in 1995 and intend to do our utmost to support it.

What do you say to those who criticize Annecy for getting too big?

Obviously, some people feel that there is simply too much going on

and feel frustrated at not being able to attend all the screenings, retrospectives and exhibitions. What you have to realize is Annecy's public is as diverse as animation itself. You need to draw up as wide a range of film programs as possible. That's the way we organize programs from relatively little known areas of the world as Albania, India, China, Latin America and South Africa, to name but a few.

Similarly, our exhibitions are specially designed to reveal the multiple facets of animators. Animators are not just filmmakers, they are also artists, painters, illustrators, puppet makers, graphic designers and sculptors. They invent their own techniques, ranging from traditional cel to computer, sand, pin screen, glass etching and plasticine animation. This is what the exhibitions try to emphasize.

We also feel that it is crucial to organize a complete retrospective and tributes to a specific animator or group of animators at each edition of the festival. For example, in 1995 we organized a whole series of screenings, along with an exhibition and a number of lectures on

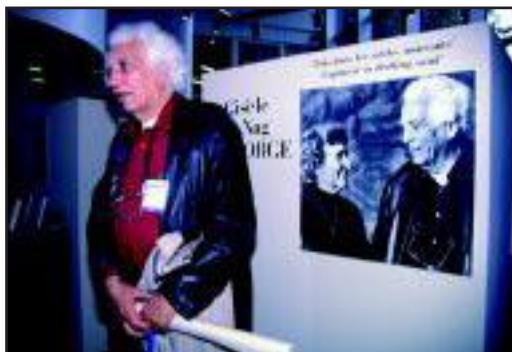


A view of the city: the Castle and the lake.
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

Gisèle and Nag Ansorge. We even brought out a videocassette of their films and published a monograph on the couple's work. In this way, the film public at Annecy gained a rare insight into Nag Ansorge's experiences with animation in a psychiatric environment.

Of course, Annecy is more than just a festival that takes place every two years. We carry out a whole range of archival activities and have set up a database for animation, together with a museum of animation artifacts.

I agree, Annecy is immense; but it is only as big as the animation world wants it to be. You can't stop people from coming here, nor should you. The festival and MIFA have grown just as animation has grown. It's true that, during festival time, Annecy is one big animation city, throbbing with artists, students, producers, distributors, investors and buyers.



Nag Ansorge
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

Is Annecy going to become an annual event?

[I hope so.] It is exactly what I have been trying to do since 1989! Animation has changed so radically since the festival was set up in the early 1960s, that it is simply inevitable. Thirty years ago, it took months, even years to make a short film lasting a few minutes. Nowadays, you can put out a new 13 x 13 minute TV series in just six

months. The animation industry needs an annual gathering in Annecy, with an annual competition which can act as a showcase for the latest and greatest in this branch of the seventh art. The festival and the market, like animated filmmaking and the economics of the industry are inextricably linked. And the rendezvous is in Annecy.

Animators are not just filmmakers, they are also artists, painters, illustrators, puppet makers, graphic designers and sculptors.

Everything is possible in Annecy—you simply have to try it.. We've got a giant outdoor screen complete with its own fairy tale mountain backdrop, star-filled sky and shimmering lake which provided a magic moment for *Fantasia* back in 1993! Not only did we have 8,000 spectators nightly, but there was even one filmmaker who organized an impromptu screening of his work on the back side of the screen! Of course, you also get your fair share of drama too; for instance, directors will refuse to show their films in the panorama section, because they had not been selected for competition. But Annecy is fun, with plenty of off-screenings and parties. Can you imagine the effect that 5,000 film professionals have on a town of 50,000 inhabitants? And how is all possible? Through the positive, unflinching support that the festival receives from the animation community.

—Translated from the French by
Christopher Mason

Annick Teninge was, for six years, the Assistant Director of Annecy.

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Rendez-vous à Annecy: Interview avec Jean-Luc Xiberras



Jean-Luc Xiberras
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

Le Festival d'Annecy est la plus ancienne et peut-être la plus prestigieuse de toutes les manifestations consacrées au cinéma d'animation, à l'origine de toutes les autres. Annecy a également été le premier à créer un marché du film d'animation. Il est aujourd'hui question de rendre le festival annuel — la plupart des autres festivals ont lieu les années "sans" Annecy. Une interview avec Jean-Luc Xiberras, directeur depuis 1982, pour en savoir plus sur le festival et son directeur.

Quel a été votre parcours jusqu'à Annecy?

J'ai commencé ma carrière professionnelle dans les années 60 comme animateur-directeur d'équipements socio-culturels. Dans les années 70, j'ai pris la charge d'un équipement plus important, ce qui m'a permis de développer des spectacles vivants et de créer une des premières salles d'art et essai en dehors de Paris, en Haute-Savoie.

J'ai fait découvrir au public local les œuvres de réalisateurs tels que Saura, Fassbinder, Herzog Wenders et Cassavetes, qui étaient peu connus à l'époque. A la fin des années 1970, j'ai créé une grande salle de spectacles vivants (musique, danse, théâtre) où l'on a pu accueillir des spectacles du Living Theater et du Bread and Puppet Theater, ainsi que des opéras tels que *Carmen* de Peter Brook.

Qu'était le festival à votre arrivée et quels changements majeurs avez-vous apporté dans l'organisation?

J'ai été sollicité pour prendre la direction du Festival d'Annecy en septembre 1982 ; le laps de temps pour préparer l'édition 1983 a été extrêmement court. J'ai eu de la chance — j'ai pu bénéficier du nouvel équipement culturel de Bonlieu qui avait été inauguré en 1981. Auparavant, le Festival d'Annecy avait lieu dans l'ancien Théâtre-Casino.

En 1981, 300 à 400 personnes avaient participé au Festival. C'était un chiffre énorme à l'époque. Le Festival d'Annecy montrait surtout des courts métrages d'auteurs. Il n'y avait qu'une salle de cinéma, une projection quotidienne de films en compétition, une ou deux rétrospectives et une seule exposition. Le Festival était perçu comme une man-

ifestation où les professionnels, les auteurs pouvaient se rencontrer et tranquillement boire une bière à la terrasse du vieux Casino.

Pendant 20 ans, le Festival a été organisé depuis un bureau permanent installé à Paris, avec l'aide précieuse du Ciné-Club annécien (un des plus importants cine-clubs français, qui comptait entre 4000 et 5000 adhérents). En 1982, le conseil d'administration du Festival trouvait qu'il fallait changer de direction et se tourner vers l'avenir. Il souhaitait également utiliser au maximum les structures culturelles d'une ville telle qu'Annecy, qui est ainsi devenu le bureau permanent du festival. Pierre Jacquier, qui avait succédé à Charles Bosson à la présidence du Festival disait " La ferveur et le dévouement de l'équipe du Ciné-Club n'avait pas faibli, ni le travail et la compétence des organisateurs parisiens. C'est l'environnement qui changeait, les



Cannes 1958: Norman McLaren, Joy Batchelor, Paul Grimault, John Halas
Courtesy of Annecy Festival



Stand Softimage au MIFA
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

attentes du public, les conditions de production et de diffusion. Le festival tournait rond mais il tournait un peu en rond ; il devenait le sanctuaire du film d'auteur, parfois suspect d'un certain académisme, contourné par les nouvelles fonctions du cinéma d'animation, les nouvelles cinématographies, les nouvelles technologies, les problèmes économiques."

Ce changement d'orientation avait créé une fracture dans la communauté des animateurs en France, ce qui a rendu mon travail d'autant plus difficile lorsque je suis entré en fonction en 1982. Je n'avais pas une grande connaissance de l'animation à l'époque — cependant j'ai tout de suite compris qu'il fallait augmenter le nombre de salles et utiliser le potentiel qui existait déjà à Annecy. Donc, en 1983, nous sommes passés à 6 salles et avons multiplié par trois le nombre de projections de films en compétition. Je voulais que le Festival devienne une véritable fête de l'animation. J'ai augmenté le nombre d'hommages et de rétrospectives. Dès 1983, nous avons commencé à présenter 8 à 9 hommages et rétrospectives et 4 à 5 expositions. J'ai été très surpris de voir 1300 professionnels venir à Annecy en 1983. Nous avions pu relever le défi.

Ensuite nous avons décidé d'in-

tégrer toutes les techniques d'animation dans la compétition, y compris les nouvelles technologies, qui étaient très mal vues par les traditionnalistes de l'époque.

Pourquoi la création du Marché? Etais-ce une nécessité économique? Avez-vous été un pionnier?

Nous avons commencé à travailler sur l'idée de créer un marché du film spécifiquement consacré à l'animation en 1983, même s'il n'existe pas une véritable industrie de l'animation à ce moment-là. On nous disait que c'était utopique. A l'époque les auteurs qui venaient à Annecy avaient beaucoup de mal à montrer leurs films en dehors du Festival. Donc, en 1983, nous avons créé une sorte de mini-marché dans la Salle Eugène Verdun à côté du Théâtre. Il y avait quelques tables à trétaux, des sociétés de matériel (crayons, gouache) et un petit nombre de producteurs qui osaient afficher leur nom et essayaient de rencontrer des créateurs. C'était très informel, très artisanal. Mais ce mini-marché nous a permis de constater qu'un besoin existait.

En 1985 nous avons pu créer le premier MIFA avec l'aide du ministère de la culture qui avait lancé le plan "Image" afin de soutenir l'industrie de l'animation. Il y avait très peu de producteurs européens de TV présents dans ce marché à l'époque — les productions TV étaient dominées par les japonais et les américains. Le premier MIFA en 1985 était sur 500 mètres carrés, avec de véritables stands. Il y avait beaucoup d'ex-

posants français, quelques européens et presque pas d'américains. On a progressé d'édition en édition.

En 1987 nous avons pu agrandir le MIFA et avons construit un chapiteau dans le jardin de Bonlieu ; en 1989 la surface d'exposition a été portée à 2000 mètres carrés, sur le Pâquier. En 1991 le MIFA s'est installé au nouveau centre de conférences dans les locaux de l'Impérial Palace où nous avons monté un chapiteau de 2000 mètres carrés. Ce fut la même chose en 1993. 1995 a été l'apothéose avec un chapiteau de 3 000 mètres carrés et toute la surface du centre de conférences de l'Impérial, salons et salles de conférence compris. Ce fut également l'année des majors américains qui se sont rendus en masse à Annecy.

Je comprends pourquoi tant d'autres organismes cherchent actuellement à créer des marchés du film spécifiquement consacrés à l'animation. Nous avons passé 10 ans à lutter pour prouver qu'un tel marché existe.

Comment le Festival a-t-il évolué?

Le festival a évolué en fonction de la réalité économique et des



Vue extérieure du MIFA
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

changements artistiques intervenus dans le monde de l'animation.

A partir de 1985, nous avons commencé à inclure les séries TV, les publicités et les films de commande dans la compétition. Cependant, nous nous sommes rendus compte de la nécessité de faire sélectionner les différents genres par différents comités de sélection. Il est très difficile de juger ensemble les courts métrages, les longs métrages et les films pour la télévision.

En 1987 nous avons donc décidé de créer 2 comités de sélection différents mais nous avons retenu la même programmation unique de films en compétition. Ceci présentait des difficultés pour les spectateurs qui avaient du mal à regarder un mélange de films de commande et de télévision avec des films d'auteurs.

Nous avons ensuite modifié la programmation pour organiser des projections par genre — courts métrages, longs métrages, productions TV et films de commande, mais sans créer des jurys différents, ce qui a été une erreur car les membres du jury rencontraient les mêmes problèmes et avaient du mal à juger divers genres ensemble.

En 1985, nous avons encore modifié le système et introduit des prix spécifiques pour chaque genre, sans toutefois renoncer à un seul Grand Prix. Cela a très bien fonctionné en 1993 mais en 1995 les jurys n'ont pas réussi à se mettre d'accord sur le choix du film et il y a donc eu 2 ex-aequo. Nous avons modifié le règlement pour Annecy 97. Chaque genre aura son Grand Prix et autres prix/mentions.

Le nombre de participants au Festival d'Annecy est en augmentation constante. En 1981, il y avait 340 professionnels présents au Festival. Il y en avait 1300 en 1983, et plus de 4000 en 1995 — Nous



Vue du MIFA

Courtesy of Annecy Festival

attendons 5000 participants pour l'édition 97. Cette augmentation correspond à l'explosion du cinéma d'animation à travers le monde. Bien sûr, cette évolution a provoqué beaucoup de grincements et beaucoup de critiques. Mais il y a eu également beaucoup de joie. Nous sommes passés de 350 films présentés à la sélection en 1983 à 1236 en 1995, et nous ne savons pas encore combien de films nous recevrons pour Annecy 97. En général le nombre de films soumis à la sélection augmente de 200 par édition.

Ce qui est important c'est de découvrir et de favoriser l'émergence de nouveaux talents. Dans ce but nous avons créé en 1995 une nouvelle compétition pour les films d'étudiants et de fin d'études. Nous y sommes très attachés.

Quelle réponse apportez-vous à ceux qui reproche à Annecy son gigantisme?

Bien sûr le Festival d'Annecy est devenu très grand. Il y a beaucoup de programmes. Pour certains cela est extrêmement frustrant car on n'a pas le temps de tout voir. Un festival comme celui d'Annecy se doit de proposer une programmation extrêmement diverse pour répondre aux attentes également très diverses des professionnels et amateurs de cinéma.

Nous proposons des programmations de cinématographies peu connues, telles que celles de l'Albanie, l'Inde, la Chine, l'Amérique Latine et l'Afrique du Sud.

Dans le même esprit, nous organisons des expositions afin de mettre en évidence toute la richesse des créateurs de films d'animation. Les animateurs ne sont pas de simples cinéastes — ce sont des artistes à part entière : peintres, illustrateurs, sculpteurs, graphistes et inventeurs de techniques — du cellulo à l'animation assistée par ordinateur, en passant par le sable, l'écran d'épingles, la peinture sur verre, la pâte à modeler...

Chaque année nous essayons d'organiser une rétrospective complète de l'œuvre d'un animateur particulier. En 1995, nous avons consacré une rétrospective, une exposition, une publication, des conférences et une cassette vidéo à l'œuvre de Gisèle et Nag Ansorge. Le public a ainsi pu découvrir en profondeur le travail original effectué par Nag Ansorge en milieu psychiatrique.

Annecy est plus qu'un Festival proprement dit — Nous avons mis en place un centre de documentation et un musée du cinéma d'animation. Nous avons également créé une immense base de données qui sert de mémoire pour l'animation.



Annecy, le Château et le lac

Courtesy of Annecy Festival

Quant au gigantisme du Festival d'Annecy, c'est les gens qui l'ont fait ainsi. Nous ne pouvons et nous ne voulons pas empêcher les professionnels de venir à Annecy. Le Festival d'Annecy est devenu le grand rendez-vous du monde de l'animation — animateurs, étudiants, producteurs, distributeurs, investisseurs et acheteurs — et la ville une véritable mégapole de l'animation.

Annecy deviendra-t-il annuel?

Je défends cette position depuis 1989. Le monde de l'animation a beaucoup changé depuis la création du Festival dans les années 60. A cette époque, il fallait des mois, voire des années, pour faire un film de quelques minutes. Maintenant on est capable de faire une série TV de 13 x 13 minutes en 6 mois! Les conditions de production et l'économie du monde d'animation sont totalement différentes aujourd'hui. On a besoin d'une compétiti-



Nag Ansorge
Courtesy of Annecy Festival

tion annuelle pour faire un bilan de l'art et pour montrer tout ce qu'il y a d'innovateur et de dynamique dans le cinéma d'animation. Le Festival et 1e MIFA sont deux pôles complémentaires. On ne peut pas avoir l'un sans l'autre. Certaines organisations cherchent à imiter ce que nous faisons mais Annecy reste le rendez-vous de l'animation.

En conclusion...?

Tout est possible à Annecy — il suffit d'essayer. Nous avons un écran géant devant le lac avec pour toile

de fond la montagne et les étoiles. En 1993 nous avons créé 1 événement avec une projection magique de *Fantasia* devant 8000 spectateurs. Il y a même eu un réalisateur qui a trouvé un moyen original de faire connaître son film : il l'a projeté de l'autre côté de l'écran! Parfois il y a des drames — tels le refus de certains cinéastes de présenter leurs films en panorama parce qu'ils n'ont pas été retenus pour la compétition. Annecy est aussi très fun — il y a des programmes off et des fêtes. Imaginez l'effet de 5 000 professionnels du cinéma sur une ville de 50 000 habitants! Et toute cette magie est possible grâce à la complicité qui existe entre le monde de l'animation et le Festival d'Annecy...

Annick Teninge a été pendant 6 ans l'adjointe du directeur du Festival d'Annecy.

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To Be or Not To Be An ASIFA- Sanctioned Festival

by Chris Robinson

This article, by the director of the Ottawa Animation Festival brings to the surface a number of long-standing complaints regarding the relationship between ASIFA-International and the major international festivals they sanction. As such, we would like to invite comments from all interested parties, whether they agree or disagree with Robinson's point of view.

Since its beginnings in 1960, ASIFA-International has taken great strides in ensuring the continuous development of the "art of animation." Through its sanctioning of festivals, creation of workshops and retrospectives, support and protection of independent animators and their films, the creation of an archive, and a number of other activities, ASIFA has not only established some much needed exhibition venues for animators, but has also shown us just how far reaching animation is as a way of expression for many different cultures. As evidence, ASIFA has evolved from one organization into many, with branches springing up all across the world. Yet some 37 years later in a drastically altered world, ASIFA-International appears to have lost its way. This once active and energetic association has become a bureaucratic "old

boys club," seemingly more concerned with the prestige and benefits of their position than with actively promoting "the art of animation." Gutsy and altruistic initiatives have given way to stagnant diplomacy. For example, recent festival reviews seemed to have been based on the hope of return invitations rather than honesty, and the ASIFA children's rights workshop (children are asked to make films based on issues adults think

has ultimately led the festival to consider withdrawing from ASIFA. Despite repeated attempts to communicate with the board in Annecy, Holland and Zagreb, with the exception of a few individuals, it did little to inquire, advise, or assist with Ottawa 96, let alone respond to my concerns about ASIFAs relationship with the festival and its overall role in animation.

Just prior to Ottawa 96, ASIFA finally contacted us. Unfortunately, all they wanted was to take advantage of the ASIFA rule that obliges festivals to cover all board members' accommodations and pass expenses.(Rule 7c: "Each festival must invite the members of the ASIFA board (22 maximum) that obliges festivals to cover all board members' accommodations and pass expenses.) Given that, with a few exceptions, board members have done nothing to assist the festival, I found it astonishing that they have the nerve to magically appear and make such demands. This was especially frustrating in light of the severe government cuts that the festival was forced to absorb this year. In anticipation of these cuts, we did our best to avoid letting them affect the quality of our programming. and looked elsewhere for cuts. (E.g., we hired less staff and reduced the size of the Selection



Logo of the 96 Ottawa Festival

are important rather than allowing them to express their own opinions), reeks of a stifling political correctness.

My recent experiences with the organization, as director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival (one of five sanctioned festivals), have not only reinforced my feelings about its stagnancy, but

Committee from five to three.) When the cut became official, the other obvious area to cut was the board invitations rule. Despite a detailed written explanation to the ASIFA board, one board member remained insistent that he be invited. He immediately called a colleague, who then complained to me and insisted that I invite the board to the festival. So much for artistic mandates.

This once active and energetic association has become a bureaucratic "old boy's club," seemingly more concerned with the prestige and benefits of their position than with actively promoting "the art of animation."

Now I must say that, in the end, this seemingly disruptive member turned out to be very helpful. Nevertheless, I am baffled by the hypocrisy of an association whose mandate is to promote independent animators and the "art of animation." Money that could have been used to maintain ASIFAs "mandate" was instead redirected to accommodate individuals from ASIFA-International and ASIFA-Canada who did absolutely nothing for the festival.

Unbelievably, one board member, who upon arrival discovered a minor problem with his hotel started screaming at festival staff and volunteers. Now this might appear to be petty gossip, but in my opinion these seemingly minor actions merely reinforce ASIFAs pettiness and stagnancy.

The State of the Rules

The second issue is the state of ASIFA festival rules. They exist in theory, but are actually rarely

enforced. At Zagreb 96, for example, its organizers, apparently without the Selection Committee's consent, put a couple of dreadful local films in competition to boost the studios' morale. The rules (5E) clearly state that all "[d]ecisions . . . are final and no limitations shall be placed on them for aesthetic, ethical, or political reasons" (a naive expectation, but a rule nonetheless). To make matters worse, an ASIFA board member was on this committee. To my knowledge, nothing has been done to address this flagrant rules violation.

But Zagreb is not alone. All ASIFA festivals violate the rules. And this perhaps says more about the rules than the offenders.

The ASIFA board recently revised its rules without any festival directors being present. Given that festival directors likely know more about the structure and context of their event than the board, and that the five festivals exist on three different continents, this is simply a ridiculous course of action. You simply cannot create a uniform set of rules for events that are themselves subject to very different social, economic and political contexts. Hence, the transgression of rules.

ASIFA-Canada

Unfortunately, these problems are not limited to ASIFA-International. ASIFA-Canada, who were slightly more active in assisting Ottawa 96, nevertheless exhibited the same characteristics. Despite having been a member for the past two years, I have, with one exception, never been told when meetings occur. During my one and only meeting with the board, like children writing letters to Santa Claus, they started reciting from their wish lists (i.e., Why

don't you do this? Why don't you do that?). These demands were made, without any offers to assist, by people who had no real grasp of the organizational structure behind the festival. Like children at Christmas, they don't care how they get the gift, as long as they get it. And even then they sometimes still find something to complain about. For example, at our expense, we offered ASIFA-Canada a page on our Web site. Within a week, an angry email arrived complaining about some of the errors on the page. A page they wrote.

The problems with ASIFA-Canada extend well beyond the festival. What appears to be a national association is in reality a Montreal-dominated chapter that is far too closely linked with the National Film Board of Canada to actually reflect and promote the many independent animators scattered throughout the country. (The recent creation of ASIFA-Vancouver was in part a response to this problem.) There are independent animators in Canada that don't work for the NFB and, if ASIFA mandate has any meaning, their concerns should be a priority over a government funded (albeit decreasing) studio.

All ASIFA festivals violate the rules. And this perhaps says more about the rules than the offenders.

Added into the mix is the routine ASIFA-Canada/International post-festival commentary, which is generally a naive response that criticizes and applauds the festival without any real context. For example, Ottawa 96 was accused by some of being too corporate. With a fuller of understanding of the dif-

ficulties facing us, accusers might have learned that without corporate support, there would have been no festival. (In fact, the success of Ottawa 96 has enabled us to create a much-needed International Student Animation Festival.) This is not to say that Ottawa 96 was perfect, it wasn't. But a more acute grasp on the contexts of each event would make for more informed opinions, positive or negative.

The relationship between ASIFA and Ottawa carries a long history, and it would be foolish to cut these ties without first attempting to mend them.

Surviving Without ASIFA?

At this time, I believe the Ottawa festival could easily survive without ASIFA, and this should be of grave concern to the board. Since Ottawa 88, entry and sponsorship levels have increased each year. While ASIFA certainly assisted Ottawa in its early years, being a sanctioned festival has not played a significant role in these increases. It is doubtful that either of these components will be affected if Ottawa loses ASIFA's approval. In a time of drastic government cuts to the cultural sector, the state of the industry more than anything else determines the success or failure of the festival. If Ottawa is now considered one of the top animation festivals in the world, thanks should go to its staff and volunteers; to the North American companies who have supported us; to the few remaining government supporters who, in the face of massive cuts, continue to acknowledge the national and local importance of the festival; not to ASIFA.

Despite these complaints, the relationship between ASIFA and Ottawa carries a long history, and it would be foolish to cut these ties without first attempting to mend them. In response to these problems, Ottawa organizers have come up with some alternatives.

For an ASIFA board member (International or Canadian) to receive free accommodations and/or passes, they will have to either find a sponsor to cover their costs, or work for the festival. This work could include curating and organizing retrospectives and/or workshops, or simply working as a staff member during the festival. Secondly, festival directors must have a say (and vote) in the creation or revision of festival rules from the beginning. The ASIFA board is simply not equipped to fully understand the structures, problems and contexts that are unique to each event. Finally, the ASIFA-International board would do well to break up the "old boys' club." This "club" has increasingly alienated the younger generation by not better informing and involving them in the ASIFA process. Most of us have no idea how one becomes elected to the board, let alone when actual meetings occur. The medium is becoming increasingly dominated by a younger generation whose concerns are not being adequately represented. If ASIFA is to be of any service, it must reflect this new generation.

These are merely a few suggestions based on my perspectives from the Ottawa festival, I am certain that there are other stories and suggestions. To ensure that these words expand beyond the screen, it is essential that a dialogue be established among ASIFA members and interested parties to discuss the future of this association.

Ottawa organizers were not overly enthused about creating a more corporate festival, but we had little choice. While other festivals can seemingly do without corporate support (e.g., Zagreb), Ottawa exists in a completely different geopolitical context. If we are to remain the most relevant animation festival in North America, we must reflect both the artistic and industrial nature of this medium. Like it or not, animation consists of art and industry, to ignore one is to deny the entire history of animation.

As we approach the end of the century, there is great excitement about the variety of new avenues open to animation. But whether ASIFA will catch up depends on its ability to escape from its 1960s ideals, break free from its bureaucratic tunnel vision, and evolve into a more active, assertive association that truly reflects the diversity of this complex and always changing world. It also depends on you. them.

Chris Robinson is Executive Director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival and the International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa, which will take place in September 1997. In addition to writing articles on film and animation, Robinson organizes a bi-weekly series of underground film screenings in Ottawa.

Festival Programming

Animation is a serious, independent form of artistic expression which has its own place between film and the fine arts. Animation is a medium which, due to its primarily visual character, can be understood beyond any boundaries put up by language. Animation is "the most direct way from a thought to a picture and of a picture to a thought." By having access to every single image, the filmmaker is obliged to handle the images critically. In contrast to live-action fictional and documentary films, animation, above all, does not aim to produce a photographic image of reality. Animation means creating or breathing life into inanimate (or dead) things. It is the purest form of cinematic art.

Festivals serve the same purpose as exhibitions do for the fine arts. They are a place of professional discussion and confrontation. To me, festivals are temporary museums, where the audience, by having a close look, helps the films make their final step into existence. No audience, no film! Animation festivals are like a market place, which is the public. They are places of communication, entertainment and joy. Festivals have to be like oases in the desert of everyday life.

The basic problem with these selection committees lies in the fact that the result of their work always consists of half-hearted compromises.

Selection and Program Planning

These ideas about animation and festivals are something I always keep in mind when I am picking films and organizing a festival. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to gain a wide range of sometimes contradictory experiences in these fields. But, it is my opinion, it is impossible to develop a definitive plan or an universally applicable strategy for the selection of films or

has been strictly observed; I think this is a good thing, since the imbalance between the number of men and women in animation still seems a lot more normal than found in documentary or live-action films.

The basic problem with these selection committees lies in the fact that, in the end, the result of their work always consists of half-hearted compromises. Thus, the representative from Austria or Russia would

not like to go home without having at least one of their country's films in the program. Or perhaps a puppet or experimental filmmaker might insist that puppet or experimental films be represented in an appropriate way. And then there is the director of an animation program who wants an adequate

number of his schools films shown, because this would have an important effect on the continued existence of his educational institute. And so on. Very often, these are the problems the committees have to deal with instead of questions of artistic and ethical values and the content of the films.

Decisions made by committees have yet another disadvantage: their members often like to hide behind the group's judgment, thereby avoiding having to voice their own opinions. Still, it is always a real pleasure for me to be a member of a jury or selection committee



Shadows in the Margarine.

programs, which can claim to be generally valid. Festivals mainly leave these decisions to selection committees and juries. It hardly ever happens that the selection is ever left to just one person.

Committees

Festivals usually choose the members of their selection committees and juries. They often take great care that the people they pick come from as many different countries as possible and enjoy a good reputation in the animation community. Recently, even the number of women picked for committees

(although payment is usually rather minimal). Over the years, I have learned to hone my own vision of the art of animation and to stand up for them in discussions.

When Only One Person is Responsible for the Selection

This is the form of selection I prefer. There is no doubt in the minds of the filmmakers, the press and the audience who is responsible. I cannot hide behind the opinion of the majority of the committee. Should I make mistakes, I only have myself to answer for them. But the most important point is the fact that the content, aesthetics, structure and composition of the program bear a clear mark and cannot be diluted by compromise.

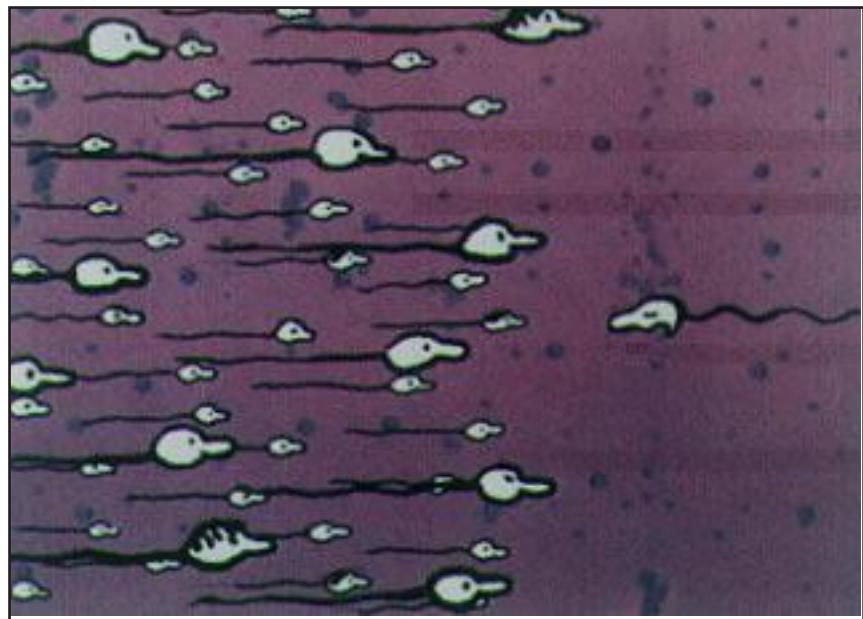
The disadvantage for me is having to rack my brains for several days over the selection of the films and about the order in which they will be shown, and not being able to sleep for fear of having made a mistake and having treated the filmmakers unjustly. However, I have been practicing this means of selection for the Leipzig Festival for the last four years, with considerable success for the filmmakers, the audi-

Festivals serve the same purpose as exhibitions do for the fine arts. They are a place of professional discussion and confrontation.

ence and the festival!

When I Make the Selection, I Try to Observe That . . .

- I have enough time to reflect on every single film.
- I watch the films at least two or



JVS Olla (Condom)

three times.

- If possible, I see the films projected on a screen, not on video.
- I talk with the filmmakers.
- Content and aesthetics have priority over technique.
- To me, in most cases, the subject of a film is more important than its technical proficiency.
- I see my respect for the great masters in relative terms.
- Rather the exciting film from a newcomer should be chosen than a boring one from a known star.
- I do not take proportional representation of the different countries into consideration.

Planning the Program I Direct My Attention On . . .

- Confronting the traditional with the modern.
- Putting the films of well-known and young filmmakers face to face.
- Comparing the old with the new.
- Coordinating the order of the films according to their content.
- Not putting films made using

the same technique one after another.

- Its length should not exceed 75 minutes.
- Structuring these 75 minutes according to the rules of classical dramaturgy.
- Putting an outstanding film at the beginning and the end of each program.
- The first film on the program has to mobilize the sensory perception of the audience.
- The important fact that a film should never outdo the film it comes after.

But I have to be honest. All these criteria are completely theoretical. In practice, it works like this: when a film touches me emotionally, it has good chance of being shown. And this is, by the way, the only criterion I can rely on and do rely on.

Otto Adler is the former director of the Stuttgart International Animation Festival, was involved with the founding in 1995 of the Fantouche Festival, in Baden, Switzerland, a member of the Advisory Board for the Ottawa International Animation Festival, has served on the juries and selection committees of numerous festivals, and is now working on a documentary film about Russian animator Fedor Kvitruk.

Confessions of a Festival Juroir



Maureen Furniss

Getting a film or video into a major international festival like Ottawa is tough. For instance, fewer than one out of 10 films (approximately 80 out of nearly 1000) submitted to last year's Ottawa International Animation Festival were selected for the official competition and another 20 or so made it into noncompetitive screenings called panoramas. (Panoramas generally contain works of interest that are not thought to be "competitive" for prizes.)

Last year, I served on the Ottawa '96 selection committee along with British 2D animator Andy Wyatt and Canadian computer animator/Sheridan College instruc-

tor Stephen Barnes. The three of us began the process of watching the thousand animated works, ranging from 10 seconds to 30 minutes in length, beginning Monday, July 8 for 10 hours a day for 5 days and then for 4 hours a day for another 3 days.

Selective Viewing

We managed to do this, in part, through "selective viewing." At least half the productions submitted, I would guess, were turned off before they had ended. Those under five minutes had the best chance of being seen all the way, though even some of these never made it past the three minute mark. Time constraints and our desire to showcase only the most impressive works motivated us to turn off anything that obviously was not going to make the cut.

Subjectivity played a large part in our decisions, but

that subjectivity was based on years of experience in creating, analyzing and/or teaching animation. What we "liked" in the screenings was less reflective of our personal tastes than of some mutually observed standard of "successful" animation. Although I am usually more drawn to experimental work, there were straight narrative films I felt very strongly about. Stephen and Andy, who seem more oriented toward representational images and story lines, were riveted by more than one abstract, non-narrative film. But despite all of our differences, the three of us almost always arrived at



DaDa by Piet Kroon.



The Sandman

the same conclusions about the "competitiveness" of any given work. By the end of the screening process, we were able to articulate several points that seemed to characterize the works we watched to the end (and possibly considered for competition). It is these points which I would like to briefly summarize, for the benefit of first-time entrants, in particular.

One of the most important factors was the first impression. With a thousand films to watch, improperly cued videos quickly became irritating (at one point, I proposed that we create a prize for the best of the color bar formations we saw—and heard, with ear-piercing clarity). Some entries were disqualified simply because we could not find them on a cassette filled with other titles that were not even entered in competition. Some entries were preceded by a number of demo-reel items and we were not sure whether the filmmaker had left

them in trying to impress us, or was just careless. Some people/organizations entered more than one production and put all of them on one tape. This caused problems when we wanted to bypass a title and move on to the next one, or to return to it for a second look. If we could not find something after a few minutes, we put it aside.

Another important point: do not count on your cassette always remaining in its box and/or being accompanied by its entry form. We occasionally had little or no idea what we were watching because a video (particularly a late entry) was not clearly marked. Each entry should be labeled with the title, filmmaker's name, country of origin, category and running time. Also, be sure that you have entered the proper category. I can't tell you how many productions in the "childrens" category were clearly inappropriate for young viewers (e.g., they depicted children being boiled or stuck on hooks), how many long films were entered in the short film category, and so forth. In some instances, films well over 30 minutes were submitted, despite the fact that half an hour was the maximum running time allowed.

Making a Good Impression

You may wonder what harm is done by some of these tactics. Although there may or may not be any immediate repercussions, the possible long-range effects of your decision are worth considering. Keep in mind that members of the

selection committee someday may be in a position to hire you, show your films elsewhere, write about you, or deal with you in other ways on a professional level. In any case, please remember that it is poor form to call, write or email the festival director and committee members to complain if your film was not selected. The person you contact in fact may have really liked you and your work, and is likely to be offended by the suggestion that he or she exercised poor judgment.

Part of making a good impression on the selection committee comes with taking care to create a strong soundtrack. A large number of films submitted were incomplete, particularly in regard to audio. With 80 slots to fill, there was little chance we would consider any production lacking a soundtrack, no matter who made it or how much "promise" it seemed to hold. Pay attention to sound design early in the production process, to assure that visual and aural elements are fully intertwined and of equally high value. Poorly-recorded sound and unprofessional voice-overs were recurring problems.

Time constraints and our desire to showcase only the most impressive works motivated us to turn off anything that obviously was not going to make the cut.

The selection committee agreed that certain signs could be considered "warnings" of poor quality. First off, there were the long expository notes or apologies written on a cassette or accompanying materials. It is not a good idea to apologize for your work—if you are worried about its presentation, you should consider entering it at a later date.



As You Like It by Alexei Karaev

Pointing out the flaws in a written note just made the selection committee all the more aware of them.

Another relates to running time. Although I do not want to give away too many "professional secrets," I can say that more than one groan was emitted after hearing that we were about to view a "first film" that ran for more than 8 minutes. Fifteen minute or longer first works were highly suspect. In fact, we found that the majority of films running more than 10 minutes—first films or otherwise—would have benefited greatly from editing. Some films were reluctantly taken out of competition after an idea that would have been great for 3 minutes was extended to 5 minutes or more and just lost momentum.

Although less of an issue, running time also was a consideration in terms of programming. Though we never rejected something merely because it ran close to 30 minutes, we agreed that a film had to be absolutely first rate to merit that amount of screen time. Our rational was that six five-minute works could be screened in the same time period as a half-hour film. With so many high-quality productions sub-

mitted, longer films were given particularly close scrutiny when it came time to narrow the field.

Our Two Cents

Finally, I would like to impart the selection committee's "two cents" of advice on building a better production, which probably is more appropriate for a course

on animation design than an essay on the selection process. However, I present these pointers with the hope that they may help first-time artists design a production that is successful in festivals.

With 80 slots to fill, there was little chance we would consider any production lacking a soundtrack, no matter who made it or how much "promise" it seemed to hold.

Be sure to give your work a professional-looking title sequence, avoiding overly pretentious titles; after the second day of viewing, the committee met the screening of films bearing deeply philosophical or cutesy titles with a deep sense of trepidation. Avoid using long opening titles, which slow the pace of your production at the time when you most want to grab the viewer's

attention and run with it.

Avoid cycling images or using holds for long periods, especially at the beginning of your film. By the time 30 seconds had elapsed, the committee members began considering whether a production should be turned off. If nothing engaging—in terms of character design, story line, sound, and so forth—had occurred by then, it was likely to suffer a premature death. By creating even a speck of interest, a film was likely to linger for at least two or three minutes. By then, we expected a building of interest; if not, an entry was likely doomed.

Some themes, visual elements and sounds were greeted with a high degree of skepticism. Probably the most difficult theme for a first film to pull off was one of alienation, where a solitary character appears in murky light in the confines of towering, prison-like walls, accompanied by heavy music or breathing. We saw this kind of production many times, but almost without exception the result was rather unaffectionate. On a similar note, student and first-time entrants often seemed too timid or inexperienced with their subject matters. Traditionally sensitive or taboo subjects, such as Christ, extreme poverty, fetuses, etc., evoke strong reactions and demand



Angel Terre de Chair

a high level of control, yet these subjects commonly appeared in heavy-handed "statement" films. Likewise, there were many instances where "cheap effects" like gore or sex were used, apparently to get the viewers' attention (but with opposite results). If you have a strong inclination to make a film involving sensitive or difficult elements, be sure to study many other "recognized" works made on similar subjects. On the other hand, students should be careful about using derivative imagery and story lines, particularly if they have been heavily influenced by a teacher. Off the top of my head, I can think of two films that were omitted from competition because they very clearly bore

the reflections of a master animator.

Character design and animated movement were probably the areas in which most of the films excelled; however, in too many cases we saw productions that looked fantastic but had nothing else going for them. We often had the feeling that an artist had no passion for his or

Probably the most difficult theme for a first film to pull off was one of alienation, where a solitary character appears in murky light in the confines of towering, prison-like walls, accompanied by heavy music or breathing.

her subject, or for some reason could not articulate those feelings through movement, sound or other important aspects of the production.

Some production problems could be overcome by a greater emphasis on working in teams. It is

the rare individual who has strengths in every area, so it is not surprising that a crew of two or more artists with skills in different aspects of the production process is more likely to produce a film that is successful on all levels. Actually, this advice applies not only to novice filmmakers, but also to more experienced animators whose entries sometimes seemed uninspired, or too reliant on worn-out techniques. A fair number of entries

strong to even make it into the panorama. But no matter what technique is used, it is vital that you be brutal with editing during pre- and post-production. Avoid the tendency to keep in extra footage just because "it took a whole weekend to do," "it cost me a bunch of money," or "it looks really cool." We have all been there, but it still does not work. There is a lot of truth in the statement that many films can be "saved in the edit."



The Jury, Annecy 95

were bypassed because they seemed only to rest on past laurels; we did not feel there was much merit in a repetitive formula appearing in what might be called a technically-proficient and/or mildly entertaining film. In some cases, we were greatly disappointed to not include the work of a well-known artist, but we felt we had to judge each film on its own merits. Having a "name" was not enough to assure anyone entry into competition, though apparently some people thought it was. I was surprised by the number of complaints received from animators and institutions citing past achievement as a reason why they should have been accepted into the Ottawa festival.

The selection committee agreed that productions (particularly first films) demonstrating a high level of technical innovation tended to be given a bit more leeway. In contrast, it seemed that a work made with a more traditional (cel-animated) process had to be exceptionally

Having said all this, I hope you found the title of my article to be intriguing, and its content to be both skillfully presented and well-edited (the same criteria I used in judging successful works for

Ottawa). If not, I am sure you stopped reading this essay well before the end, which of course is your prerogative. However, if you are still reading, please feel free to e-mail comments to me at furniss@chapman.edu.

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Brussels, The Festival

by Philippe Moins

For many years, Brussels has been synonymous with the European Community. The capital of Europe is at the same time a thousand-year-old city with a million inhabitants who live and work there. Brussels is also the site of an animation festival which has developed its special character in the course of 16 successive events.

Animation, for the Festival of Brussels, has never been a little closed world, where certain elect ones take pleasure in mutual congratulations.

At the end of the 1970s, you could count on the fingers of one hand the non-Disney animation features that the Belgian public had seen; aside from George Dunnings

The Yellow Submarine, René Laloux's *Fantastic Planet*, the Japanese *Bella Donna* and the various films of Ralph Bakshi, animation was a very rare commodity in Belgium. It was nonetheless attractive enough for a handful of film fans to have the absurd idea of creating an animation festival, baptized at that time as "A n i m a t i o n Conference."

That was 1982. The first "conference" assembled 1,500 people in a little auditorium of The Capital. The event proved sufficiently important for the association which organized it (The Parascholastic Confederation for Official Education) to decide to make it an annual event.

Since then the festival has been held every year. The name changed from Conference to Animation Week (from 1984 to 1988), then Animation Festival (since 1989). The structure also changed: lodged for a while at an animation studio (Graphoui), since 1989 it has been organized by Folioscope, a non-profit organization for which the festival is its principal activity. If the festival now attracts an average of 30,000 participants, and is partially decentralized in two other towns (Liège and Ghent), it has kept one essential characteristic from its origins: it appeals above all to the pub-

lic, before being a rendezvous for professionals.



John Lasseter (left) and Tim Burton (center) at the 1984 Brussels Festival.



Peter Lord at the 1996 Brussels Festival.

A Curious Public

We have often said at the festival that we've been lucky: The people of Brussels demonstrated a fine sense of curiosity, always ready to follow us in our divagations. Not blindly, for they recognized the difference between the wheat and the chaff. But we were always surprised to see how many people crowded in line to see the Quay Brothers, William Kentridge, David Anderson, Caroline Leaf and many others. Forty years of lowest-common-denominator TV (to make a generalization) had not dulled the alert senses of a considerable fringe of the Brussels public, and we were satisfied to know that we contributed to this in our own way.

I confess we always mixed, with a pharmacists care, the big hits, the

concessions to popular taste, the new discoveries and . . . the inevitable provocations. Thus, on the opening program of one festival, the films of Phil Mulloy were screened side-by-side with more "polite" fare, and left a very strong impression on those who saw them . . .



Left to right: Chantal Moens (Buena Vista), Doris Clevens (Co-Director, Brussels Festival), Marion Lemesre (Brussels city government), Carl Rosendahl (Pixar) and his wife, Philippe Moins (Brussels Festival), Rich Quade (Pixar) and Michael Dudok Dewitt (Richard Purdum) at the Brussels Festival.

The idea that screenings could provoke passionate controversy never bothered us!

Selection Without Competition

From the very beginning of the festival, we made one choice that we have kept right up to the present: not to have a competition with prizes. This gave us great freedom with our options, and apparently didn't discourage producers or filmmakers. Quite the contrary. Some of them were actually delighted to discover the reactions of a "true" public. The fact of having, before all else, to account for the economic viability of the festival, has dictated certain choices that we don't have to blush about: Eight years after first appearing at Annecy and other festivals, the Aardman Studios scored a triumph at Brussels with the first retrospective dedicated to their work! In 1984, John Lasseter was one of our first invited guests: He came to present 30 seconds of computer

animation; he formed lasting bonds with Brussels. Tim Burton was there the same year. His *Vincent* fascinated everyone, on a program we christened "Animation of the 80s."

The programs at the Brussels Festival have a special taste—it may seem pretentious for us to say it ourselves, but we really believe it sincerely. The absence of a competition gives us the right to be very subjective in our choices, and not have to make sacrifices for the sake of being diplomatic. Undoubtedly that's why British animation has been so abundantly represent-

ed these last few years. We couldn't help it: they are often remarkable. And that never hindered us from showing films from Albania, Mali, Portugal, Ukraine, or . . . Belgium.

A Showcase for Belgium

Why not admit it: we're happy to be able to further Belgian animation; but things are clear—in our international selection, there is never a question of representing Belgium. On the contrary, the screenings d e v o t e d explicitly to Belgium permit foreigners to get some idea of the

indigenous production, which is one of our specialties.

Belgium is composed of three distinct linguistic communities (French, Flemish and German), so we are (like all composite entities) well acquainted with linguistic and cultural frictions. The Brussels Festival, while French-speaking, has never ostracized other communities—on the contrary. Flemish productions are often well-represented, when their quality fully justifies it. Similarly, the festival is conducted in three languages: French, Dutch and English.

The absence of a competition gives us the right to be very subjective in our choices, and not have to make sacrifices for the sake of being diplomatic.

A Nonrestrictive Definition

Animation, for the Festival of Brussels, has never been a little closed world, where certain elect ones take pleasure in mutual congratulations. That means, among other things, that the definition we use for "animation" is not very restrictive: when we find a film inter-



Michael Rose (Aardman Animations) at the 1996 Brussels Festival.



Drawing from Brussel's "Golden Book."

esting, we would never deprive the audiences from seeing it under the pretext that it doesn't belong with animation in some technical sense. Laurie Anderson's *Home of the Brave* and Jim Henson's *Dark Crystal* were thus programmed at the festival—to the great amazement of some.

I confess we always mixed, with a pharmacist's care, the big hits, the concessions to popular taste, the new discoveries and . . . the inevitable provocations.

I still see the look of scepticism we got from certain people when we decided to have a retrospective of computer-generated images, including flight-simulation footage! That was in 1987, and the films were projected in video, which was an another heresy for the purists. Since then, who would dare exclude computer-generated images from an animation festival? . . .

But enough memories about old battles . . .

Children

Children constitute a good fourth of the world audience for festivals: they come in droves, in the afternoons, with their parents. We always seek ties with the educational community. For this type of school screening, we devote the better part to a feature-length film. Disney is always preferred, but programs of short films from many different countries (introduced by live actors) also give a diverse image of worldwide production. China and the countries of Northern and Eastern Europe have always found an attentive audience.

Shorts

Every year about 100 short films are screened at the festival. Some figure in retrospectives devoted to a filmmaker, a studio or (less frequently) a theme. Beside the great classics like Frédéric Back, Paul Grimault, Yuri Norstein, Jan Svankmajer or Paul Driessens, we like to turn the spotlight on people a little less known, such as Paul and Menno de Nooijer, Barry Purves, Marv Newland, Jacques Rouxel, Michael Dudok Dewit, . . .

But the festival's star programs are certainly the official selection screenings, where films from the four corners of the globe are shown without any hierarchy, in programs we put together based on aesthetics, content and humor. At Brussels, we like films with meaning, films that have guts—something lacking in so many exercises in frame-by-frame "style."

A Staff With Variable Geometry

Expositions (Starevitch, Kratky Film . . .), seminars, a studio for children, "Making of . . ." programs (for the last 10 years, they have already included such different people as the Aardman crew, Kihachiro Kawamoto, representatives of ILM,

PDI, Pixar, Rhythm & Hues, and Fantôme . . .) fill out a festival on which a team of three people work all year long. For the three months just prior the festival, they are joined by many others: at first six, then 12, multiplying up to the festival's opening night! They remain a stable group until the festival is over (one hopes, more or less), then the crew rapidly returns to its original three.

Previewing films, finding sponsors, answering letters and returning prints on time, putting stamps on tons of letters, dealing with a lot of people—that's the daily life of Folioscope. That's how one anima-



Drawing from Brussel's "Golden Book."

tion festival lives among others, with its little troubles and its great emotions.

—Translated from the French by
William Moritz

Philippe Moins created the Brussels Animation Festival in 1982, and currently co-directs it with Doris Cleven.

Brussels, le Festival

par Philippe Moins

Depuis plusieurs années, Bruxelles est devenu synonyme de Communauté européenne. La Capitale de l'Europe est en même temps une ville millénaire où vivent et travaillent un million d'habitants. Bruxelles est aussi le siège d'un Festival d'animation qui a trouvé sa spécificité au cours de seize éditions.

A la fin des années soixante-dix, on pouvait compter sur les doigts d'une main les films d'animation non disneyens qui avaient été vus par le public belge : mis à part "le Sous marin jaune" de George Dunning, "la Planète sauvage" de René Laloux, le "Bella Donna" japonais et les divers films de Ralph Bakshi, le cinéma d'animation était une denrée rarissime

en Belgique. Suffisamment attractive cependant pour qu'une poignée de cinéphiles ait l'idée farfelue de créer un festival d'animation, baptisé à l'époque "les Rencontres du cinéma d'animation".

C'était en 1982. La première édition des "Rencontres" rassembla 1.500 personnes dans une petite salle de la Capitale. En soi un événement suffisamment important pour que l'association qui l'organisait à l'époque (la Confédération parascolaire de l'Enseignement officiel) décide de la reconduire et de lui donner un caractère annuel.

Depuis, le festival a lieu tous les ans. Il a changé d'appellation : de "Rencontres", il est devenu "Semaine du dessin animé" (de 84 à 88), puis "Festival du dessin animé et du film d'animation" (depuis 89). Il a aussi changé de structure : hébergé un temps au sein d'un atelier de cinéma d'animation (Graphoui), il est depuis 1989 organisé par Folioscope, une association sans but lucratif dont c'est l'activité principale.

Si aujourd'hui le festival accueille en moyenne trente mille participants et est partiellement décentralisé dans deux autres villes du pays (Liège et Gand), il a gardé de ses origines une caractéristique

essentielle : Il s'adresse en premier lieu au public, avant d'être un rendez-vous de professionnels.



John Lasseter (gauche) et Tim Burton (centre) au Festival de Bruxelles 1984.



Peter Lord au Festival de Bruxelles 1996.

Un public curieux

Nous nous sommes souvent dit au Festival que nous avions de la chance : Le public de Bruxelles fait preuve d'une belle curiosité, toujours prêt à nous suivre dans nos divagations. Pas à l'aveuglette, car il sait séparer le bon grain de l'ivraie. Mais enfin, nous avons toujours été surpris de voir une foule aussi nombreuse se presser pour voir les frères Quay, William Kentridge, David Anderson, Caroline Leaf et beaucoup d'autres. Quarante ans de nivellement par le bas à la télévision (pour schématiser) n'ont pas annihilé les facultés d'éveil d'une frange non négligeable du public bruxellois, et c'est une satisfaction pour nous de penser que nous y avons

contribué à notre manière..

Il faut dire que nous avons toujours dosé avec une balance d'apothicaire les "locomotives", les concessions au goût dominant, les découvertes et... les éventuelles provocations. Ainsi, une ouverture du festival où des films de Phil Mulloy côtoyaient des films plus "gentils" a laissé une très forte impression à ceux qui l'ont vécue...



De gauche à droite : Chantal Moens (Buena Vista), Doris Clevens (Co-Directeur, Festival de Bruxelles), Marion Lemesre (mairie de Bruxelles), Carl Rosendahl (Pixar) et sa femme, Philippe Moins (Festival de Bruxelles), Rich Quade (Pixar) et Michael Dudok Dewit (Richard Purdum) au festival de Bruxelles.

L'idée que des projections puissent susciter des controverses passionnées ne nous a jamais inquiétés!

Une sélection sans compétition

Il y a à l'origine du festival un choix que nous avons maintenu jusqu'ici : celui de ne pas faire de compétition. Il nous donne une très grande liberté dans nos options et ne décourage apparemment pas les producteurs ou les réalisateurs, au contraire. Certains sont d'ailleurs ravis de découvrir les réactions d'un "vrai" public.

Le fait de compter avant tout sur celui-ci pour assurer la viabilité économique du festival a dicté des choix dont nous n'avons pas à rougir : Huit ans avant leur consécration à Annecy et dans d'autres festivals, les studios Aardman faisaient un triomphe à Bruxelles avec la première rétrospective qui leur ait été

consacrée! John Lasseter fut un de nos premiers invités (en 84) : Il était venu présenter trente secondes d'animation par ordinateur; il a tissé à Bruxelles des relations durables. Tim Burton était présent la même année. Son "Vincent" fascina beaucoup de monde, dans un programme que nous avions baptisé "l'animation des années quatre-vingt".

La programmation du Festival de Bruxelles a une saveur, cela a l'air prétentieux de le dire nous-mêmes mais nous le pensons sincèrement. C'est que l'absence de compétition nous donne le droit d'être très subjectifs dans nos choix et de ne pas sacrifier aux dosages complexes de la diplomatie. C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle l'animation britannique a été très abondamment représentée ces dernières années à Bruxelles. Nous n'y pouvons rien, ils sont souvent remarquables. Et cela ne nous a jamais empêché de montrer des films albanais, portugais, maliens, ukrainiens, ou...belges.

Une vitrine pour la Belgique

Pourquoi ne pas l'avouer, nous sommes heureux de pouvoir mettre en avant la

production belge d'animation, mais les choses sont claires : dans notre sélection internationale, il n'a jamais été question de sur représenter la Belgique. Par contre, les séances baptisées fort explicitement "C'est du belge" permettent aux étrangers de se faire une idée de la production autochtone, qui est une des spécificités de Bruxelles.

La Belgique est constituée de trois communautés linguistiques distinctes. (française, flamande et germanophone) Elle connaît, comme toutes les entités composites, des tiraillements d'ordre linguistique ou culturel. Le Festival de Bruxelles, s'il est francophone, n'a jamais pratiqué d'ostracisme à l'égard des autres communautés, au contraire. Les productions flamandes sont souvent bien représentées, ce que leur qualité justifie pleinement. De même, la communication du festival est déclinée dans trois langues : le français, le néerlandais et l'anglais.

Une définition non restrictive

L'animation, pour le Festival de Bruxelles, n'a jamais été un petit monde fermé, où quelques initiés se font plaisir en se congratulant mutuellement. Cela signifie entre



Michael Rose (Aardman Animations) au Festival 1996.



Dessins du "Livre d'Or" du Festival

autres que la définition que nous avons donnée au cinéma d'animation est peu restrictive : quand nous jugeons un film digne d'intérêt, nous n'en privons jamais le public, sous prétexte qu'il n'appartiendrait pas à l'animation au sens technique. "Home of the Brave" de Laurie Henderson ou "Dark Crystal" de Jim Henson ont ainsi été programmés au festival, à la grande stupéfaction de quelques uns.

Je revois encore l'air dubitatif de certains lorsque nous avons décidé de faire un programme complet d'images de synthèse, avec entre autres des images de simulateur de vol! C'était en 87, les films étaient projetés en vidéo Barcovision, encore une hérésie pour les puristes d'alors. Depuis, qui oserait écarter les images de synthèse d'un festival d'animation...

Mais trêve de souvenir d'anciens combattants...

Les enfants

Ils constituent un bon quart de l'audience globale du festival : ils viennent en masse avec leurs parents l'après midi. Nous tissons toujours des liens avec les milieux sco-

liaires. Pour ce type de séance, nous faisons la part belle aux longs métrages. Les Disney s'y taillent souvent une part de choix, mais des programmes de courts métrages vraiment internationaux (doublés en direct par des comédiens) donnent aussi une image non univoque de la production mondiale. La Chine, les pays d'Europe du Nord et de l'Est y ont toujours trouvé une écoute très attentive.

Les courts métrages

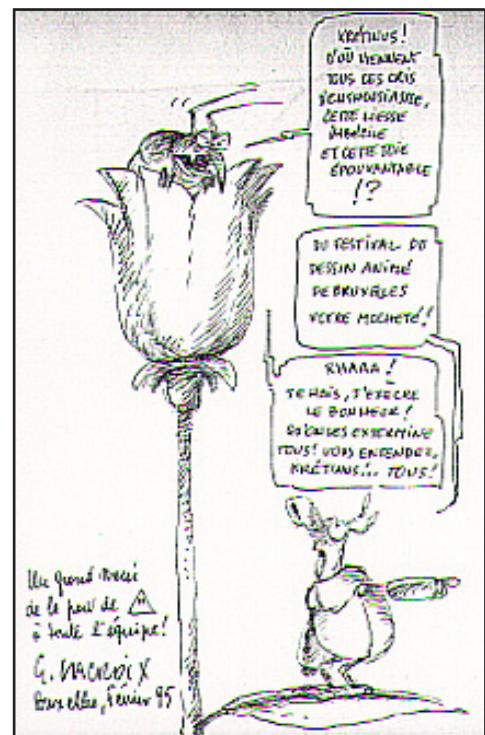
Bon an mal an, c'est une centaine de courts métrages qui sont montrés dans l'enceinte du festival. Certains figurent dans des rétrospectives consacrée à un réalisateur, un studio ou (moins fréquemment) une thématique. A côté de grands classiques comme Frédéric Back, Paul Grimault, Youri Norstein, Jan Svankmajer ou Paul Driessens, nous aimons mettre l'accent sur des personnalités un peu moins connues, comme Paul et Menno de Nooijer, Barry Purves, Marv Newland, Jacques Rouxel, Michael Dudok Dewit,...

Mais la section phare du festival est bien sûr la sélection officielle, où des films des quatre coins du monde figurent sans aucune hiérarchie, dans des programmes où nous dosons recherche esthétique, humour et contenu. A Bruxelles, nous aimons les films qui véhiculent du sens et ont des tripes, ce qui manque à tant d'exercices de style "image par image".

Une équipe à géométrie variable

Des expos (Staréwitch, Kratky film,...), des séminaires, des ateliers pour enfants, des séances "making of" (en plein développement depuis deux ans, elles ont déjà accueilli des gens aussi différents que l'équipe de Aardman, Kihachiro Kawamoto, des représen-

tants d'ILM, Pixar, PDI, Rhythm and Hues, Fantôme,...), complètent un festival pour lequel une équipe de trois personnes se dépense toute l'année. Elles sont rejoints les trois mois qui précèdent le Festival par beaucoup d'autres : ils sont six, puis douze et se multiplient ainsi jusqu'à l'ouverture du festival! Leur nombre reste ensuite stable jusqu'à la clôture, du moins on l'espère, puis l'équipe revient rapidement à sa dimension initiale.



Dessins du "Livre d'Or" du Festival

Visionner des films, trouver des sponsors, répondre au courrier et renvoyer les copies à temps, timbrer des tonnes de courrier et négocier avec des tas de gens, c'est la vie quotidienne à Folioscope. Ainsi vit un festival d'animation parmi d'autres, avec ses petits tracas et ses grandes émotions.

Philippe Moins a créé le festival de Bruxelles en 1982 et le co-dirige actuellement avec Doris Cleven.

Mancia Musings

by Mark Langer

Wherein the Museum of Modern Art's Adrienne Mancia reminisces to Mark Langer about her past efforts in animation programming and her thoughts about the state of the craft today.

When I was asked to interview Adrienne Mancia, veteran Curator—Film Exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, I was delighted. This was not only because of Adrienne's prominence in the field, but also, like many others involved in film programming, I regard Adrienne as a mentor. Indeed, my first experience of an animation festival was in company with Adrienne and Ian Birnie (now programming films for the Los Angeles County Museum) at the old casino at Annecy in the mid-70s.

Adrienne Mancia began at the Museum of Modern Art in 1964 as a secretary and assistant to Richard Griffith, Director of the Department of Film. For over 30 years, she has been an innovator in film programming in the United States, and a fixture on juries and at film festivals internationally. In light of Adrienne's particularly strong commitment to the short live-action film and animation, I asked her to discuss

the history of animation programming at the Museum of Modern Art and elsewhere, as well as her views on the state of animation programming today.

My film career really began at Contemporary Films, which was headed by Leo Dratfield. He was one of the pioneers, along with people like Tom Brandon of Audio-Brandon, of non-theatrical

styled "film library" which distributed, among other works, National Film Board films, the first films of the French Nouvelle Vague directors (like Truffaut, Resnais, Marker, Varda and Godard) and British Free Cinema, which included shorts by Lindsay Anderson. Leo Dratfield loved animation and introduced me to venues like Zagreb, Tours and Oberhausen, where I first was



Langer Mancia 01 Left to right: Adrienne Mancia, Louise Beaudet, Jacques Drouin, and Helene Tanguay at Ottawa 96. Photo by Candy Kugel. [Guillaume: If you have to crop this photo, please leave in Louise Beaudet.]

film distribution in the U.S. Dratfield's company, Contemporary Films, was a self-

able to see animated films. Leo was a man who made things happen and he was one of my

mentors.

Of course, in those days, there were controversial and challenging organizations for film exhibition in New York. Amos Vogel ran Cinema 16, an independent art society that showed animated films, among other artistic movies. Jonas Mekas was the leader of "underground films"—films which championed the avant-garde. There was a small but active community that supported alternate cinema.

I thought it was for kids. I wanted to be an adult. I had to grow up to be able to appreciate American animation.

Then, the job as Richard Griffith's assistant opened and I was recommended by Clara Grossman and Anne Schutzer who were active in programming and distribution in New York and Los Angeles. When I first came to MoMA, very little was being done in the area of animation. There was some material in the collection that Iris Barry had brought to the archive, but little animation work was being added to the collection or exhibited. I felt that this was an unfortunate gap in our activities. Margareta Akermark, who was the Head of the Circulating Film Library, shared my enthusiasm for short films and animation. I couldn't take care of all of it myself, but together we were able to do a weekly short film program called "Wednesdays at Noon" in which we would show shorts—frequently animation. However, this program was Margareta's responsibility and she was devoted to it.

Before coming to Contemporary, I lived in Italy and

belonged to film clubs where I saw some foreign animation. I had grown up with American animation. It was a natural part of my childhood in America and I thought it was for kids. I wanted to be an adult. I had to grow up to be able to appreciate American animation. Only later, through the work that you, Leonard Maltin, Greg Ford, John Canemaker and others were doing, did I realize how inventive and subversive classic American animation was. From there, I went on to appreciate independent American animation, such as the Hubleys and Jordan Belson.

A Whole New World

But for me to discover European animation—it was a whole new world. I found it to be fascinating, challenging and often bewildering, like the great Polish animation. The artistry and craft of a Starevitch or a Trnka was a revelation. My interest until then was more towards animators like Len Lye or Robert Breer, both great artists.

The defining film for me, that changed my ideas about film was not an animated film but Maya Deren's *Mesches of the Afternoon*. Later, Len Lye's work, although so different, had that same effect on me. It opened new doors. Much of that came through Margareta Akermark, who was a friend of Len Lye. At Contemporary, I first saw the work of Norman McLaren, who was a genius. He could do everything. As the years passed, I discovered great animators in Japan, like Kawamoto whose *Dojōji Temple* impressed me. Puppet animators like Trnka, Starevitch and Segundo de Chomon changed all my ideas about pup-

pet animation. And then there were the Russian and Eastern European schools of animation—to be able to tell stories like Norstein or create mood like Svankmajer . . .

Bringing Them Back to America

I loved these films and I wanted to bring them back to America. The first international animation program I did at the museum was after the Zagreb Festival in 1972. Zagreb was different then, filled with freshness, vitality and humor. The work coming from the Zagreb Studio was so lively and inventive. I met Louise Beaudet there and we decided to collaborate to bring these films to North America—she to the Cinémathèque Québécoise

Louise Beaudet had the best animation archive in the world in Montreal and was my guide.

in Montreal and me to New York.

The "Best of Zagreb" show was a success, and we began to bring in other venues, such as Edith Kramer's Pacific Film Archives in Berkeley and the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Boston. Increasingly, there were other venues that wanted the Zagreb show that Louise and I programmed, but we couldn't handle the work. We were able to do what we could only because Yugoslavia would fund cultural activities. The head of the Studio, Zelimir Matko, was an entrepreneur. He headed sales and marketing for the Zagreb Studio and he helped Louise and I bring the films we chose to North America by speaking to various producers and animators and encouraging

them to cooperate with us.

Louise had the best animation archive in the world in Montreal and was my guide to all this. We decided that based on the "Best of Zagreb" show, we would do the "Best of Annecy" in alternate years. We also did a "Best of Ottawa" once and two "Best of Hiroshima" shows. These programs were always chronically underfunded. We would get travel and hospitality by being invited to sit on juries, by begging for hospitality from the festivals or sometimes a little from our institutions to cover print transporta-

Frankly, outside of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, I do not know an institution where the exhibition of animation is a priority.

tion, etc.

What I tried to do with the programming, a little subversively, was to draw it out for a week. With the "Best of Zagreb" or "Annecy" as an anchor, we would also program homages to filmmakers or present animation from various countries—Japanese animation, Khitruk, Pritt Pjarn, and so on. We did our "Best of..." until a year ago. Louise has been in ill health and wanted to retire. This, plus a shortage of funds stopped the program. Frankly, outside of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, I do not know an institution where the exhibition of animation is a priority.

Where Do People Go?

Where do people go for alternate animation? I don't know, and I am concerned. The Ottawa Festival recently did Raimund Krumme, who combines the best

of Beckett and Keaton. His work should be shown in New York and everywhere.

I'm also disappointed with the animators in New York and the independent film community. When we run these programs, they should come out and support each other much more. I don't think they make enough of an effort. There is much that they can learn and enjoy from foreign filmmakers—both independent and others. Animators should support their own art. Animation still isn't properly appreciated as an art in galleries and museums. If you mention it to curators, they do not seem to be truly interested. Not that I don't find commercial work interesting. I never looked at *The Simpsons* seriously until I looked at two episodes in Ottawa. The writing is superb! Writing won't do everything. *Toy Story* is brilliantly written, but I can hardly look at it. It's ugly. Despite its three-dimensionality, the visuals are "flat"—although compared to most animation on TV, it looks marvelous. But by my personal taste, computer animation is not for me. I'm waiting for it to work. I want to look at it and be hit on the head and say "Eureka—it works!" I would like to see talents like the Quay brothers working this way and making it happen. I want a great artist to adopt computer animation and come up with something I can care about. Technique is only a means. If they have the art in their heads, it doesn't matter what technique they use.

As to my work with animation in the future, I'm still available to promote animation. If nobody cares, things disappear. When we discontinued the short film programs and the "Best of

Annecy" and "Zagreb", letters of protest didn't come pouring in. We're losing venues for certain kinds of animation that we need. When cable television came in, I hoped independent animation would find a new venue. Instead, we have more channels with the same old animation, although people like ASIFA-East President Linda Simensky are trying to change that.

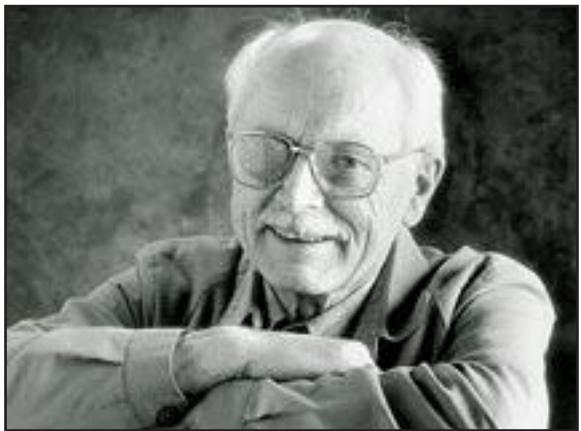
I'm not pessimistic, but I'm skeptical. You need people who care and realize independent animation is an endangered species. Russia, the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia—what are their studios doing now? It's sad. We need a new wave of animators who produce work we care about. When you think about how much money went into *Pocahontas* and what the result was—I hate the intrusion of this into festivals. I don't mind the recruiting by companies like Warner Bros. and Disney, but the focus in the programming should be on art, rather than on commerce.

Mark Langer teaches film at Carleton University in Ottawa Canada. He is a frequent contributor to scholarly journals and a programmer of animation retrospectives. He can be reached by email at mlanger@ccs.carleton.ca.

FESTIVALS REASONING

Compiled by the Staff of Animation World Magazine

To round off our festival issue, we herein provide the thoughts of a number of filmmakers and executives from around the world in reply to the question: "What is the value of submitting animated productions to festivals?"



Frédéric Back

Frédéric Back, Animator, Montréal.

In the course of time we can appreciate the wisdom of the people who have been at the origin of the animation film festivals we know today. Until then, the presentation of works was mostly an individual affair, with little consequences.

Like any art form, animation needs the means and events to be enhanced and discovered. For this, festivals give governments animation producing industries and press to allow this important communication art the exposure it deserves.

Festivals have become important occasions to honor creators, to reveal the state of the art, to underline the evolution of talents and techniques.

It is their duty to promote high quality standards and favor meetings with professionals, buyers and audiences on an international scale. For animation art and for everybody, festivals are positive and stimulating.

Bruno Bozzetto, Filmmaker, Milan.

Submitting animated productions to festivals is always interesting, but I would like to suggest to young authors to participate most of all in festivals which do not specialize only in animation.

In fact, in animation festivals, it is possible to meet right authors and artists, marvellous persons, participants and organizers; but the great risk is to always be with the same people, to listen to the same speeches, the same critics, the same points of view. This prevents us from growing, comparing our reality with the one of "live-action" cinema, which is our great brother.

I think that a mixed festival, with the presence of famous actors and directors, may offer more possibilities, brings people usually far from

our world into contact with it, and facilitates new points of view.

Furthermore, in this kind of festivals, the press has much more echo all over the world and this fact helps authors and realizers very much.

The main risk of choosing these festivals is that, even if they accept animation, often they relegate it to screenings of secondary importance, as it it was only a filling program.

That's why it is very important to know in advance the kind of treatment every festival gives to our products and then make a decision.

Trying to make a comparison, I would say that in one kind of festivals we play "at home" and in the other kind we play "abroad." . . . Anyway, I think that it is always worth playing.

J.J. Sedelmaier, J.J. Sedelmaier Productions, White Plains, New York.

I enter the studios work into various festivals, to basically spread the visual word of what we've been up to, and who in the studio is doing it. The talented people who do the work for/with us, really don't get much of a chance for the recognition they deserve. Most of our work airs only in the United States, so a showing in a festival (or even a

competition) assures our work a level of visibility it wouldn't have otherwise. Festivals also carry a certain level of publicity. The Annie Awards, for example, arranges a media "blitz" unlike any festival that we've been involved in.

By far the most gratifying aspect of this whole procedure, is getting together with people at the festivals who are in the animation industry and whose work you respect. Most of the time, this gathering "ritual" is the *only* chance you get to hang out with your peers. Consequently, there's no other way I'm going to have a chance to spend time with Marv Newland or even Bill Plympton (and Bills in New York!).

I once asked someone visiting the studio in White Plains from New Zealand, how they had heard of us. They gave me an extremely puzzled look and replied, "Well . . . you guys are famous!". You don't get *that* reaction from your work simply airing as per the clients schedule. . .

Kihachiro Kawmoto, Filmmaker, Tokyo.

Because I am so busy preparing for the exhibition of my works right now, I can only send you a few lines in reply to your question:

- 1) Gathering good animations.
- 2) Having attractive guests.
- 3) Training audiences to have the right eyes.

A festival without these three conditions would only waste my time.

John Andrews, Vice President, Animation, MTV Music Television, New York.

Since animation festivals are a major focus of professional attention to independent and commercial animated filmmaking, they are

worth the effort of the submission process. Festivals are a great stimulation of discourse on the dimension of the industry. They build reputations. They bring creators and marketers together. They keep good films alive beyond their initial debut

You are encouraged to be bigger than life, because it is a festival where directors are king. These festivals attract distributors, film buyers, producers, recruiters and critics. It is very possible to license your film and land a job.



John R. Dilworth

or broadcast. I like 'em.

John R. Dilworth, Filmmaker, New York City.

Festivals provide many opportunities. The most obvious is the screening of your work for hundreds or possibly thousands of viewers. Like painters who dream of a gallery to hang their canvasses, film needs to be projected and fill a large white canvass of its own.

My favorite festivals are international ones, which can bring together ideas from around the world. One can learn much about the lifestyles of other artists—artists creating such different art than your own, yet at the same period of time and from different lands. Simply open your mouth and begin speaking. Language is never a problem. There is always a translator lurking about.

Short film festivals offer more diversity of films and filmmakers. They also pay better attention to you if you are a director. And that is vital. As a filmmaker you want to be treated with a degree of respect.

The value of festivals is more subtle and complex than someone writing you a check and walking away with your work. It is about competition, recognition and dedication. It is a horrible feeling not to be

accepted and an exhilarating feeling if you are. Most importantly, you are taking the responsibility of presenting your work and accepting the consequences. And if all you want to do at festivals is travel, party and fall in love, then you have my blessings. Bon journée.

Joan Ashworth, Animation Course Director, Royal College of Art, London.

For students and staff of the Royal College of Art Animation Course attending festivals offers the chance to see their work amongst other animated films to compare and learn from the reactions of an audience. Discussion preceding or following the screening gives an opportunity to explore and discuss the content or technique of the films more fully. This is a rare opportunity peculiar to festivals as films are more often screened without their makers present.

For students who may feel nervous attending a screening of a first film it is an invaluable experience. It is flattering and encouraging to

have a film invited to a festival and educational to receive feedback from a variety of audiences.

The Animation Course distributes students' films as far and as frequently as funds allow which shows how seriously we take the screenings at festivals. Festivals represent a valuable opportunity to inform animators worldwide that a course exists where one can study animation at a postgraduate level in a supportive environment.

Responses to films shown at festivals help the Course to evolve. Festivals are the only opportunity to see a huge range of exciting short films which would otherwise not be screened. This gives the art form a chance to evolve and mature and encourages a cross fertilization of ideas and techniques. This exchange of ideas and chance meetings with other filmmakers is a healthy change from the insular world of animation production.

Bill Plympton, Filmmaker, New York City.

Its a good way to create a buzz about your film, especially if it gets an award, or if it gets big laughs and applause from the audience. And that's a way to get distribution,



Bill Plympton

because distributors come to festivals.

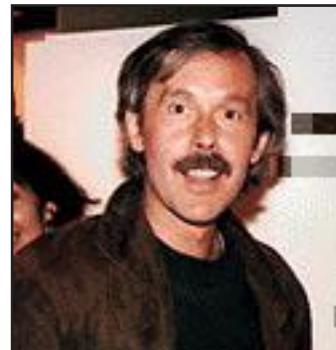
Clare Kitson, Commissioning Editor, Animation, Channel Four Television, London.

I really don't have anything very original to say about festivals. For me personally the major interest is in being able to see the new films and being able to track exciting new filmmakers. It's certainly good also to get feedback on the films I have commissioned. Although winning shouldn't matter, it actually does. Because one-off, "auteur" animated shorts do not get very high ratings, there needs to be some other attraction, in order for my superiors to continue giving me the budget to commission them. The prestige of a prize or two certainly helps there. And it's always nice to meet old friends and compare notes with colleagues overseas. But I think that perhaps attendance at film festivals is more important for the creative people than for those of us on the administrative side. The injection of new ideas is a really valuable impetus for filmmakers.

Raimund Krumme, Animation Director, Wild Things Productions, Hollywood.

I don't like to go to festivals if I don't have anything to show. When I see new films, I somehow feel I have to give something too (although I hate sitting through a screening of one of my own films). But these moments of angst are part of it. Like in a family reunion, you want to bring something when you participate.

Of course, there are other reasons too. For a short film producer/director/distributor, it is still the best way to reach a larger audience and sell your film. And after all, it may be one of the rare occasions



Raimund Krumme

w h e n
you see
your film
in a cine-
ma, pro-
jected on
a big
screen.

Jerry Beck

Vice President, Animation, Nickelodeon Movies, Hollywood.

I think it's very important for animators to make their own films and showcase their work. Obviously, your peers are interested in seeing your work and so are producers, agents, and other industry personnel who may require your unique talents. Most animators have ideas which challenge conventional "Hollywood studio" thinking. These visions must be expressed and exposed, they often inspire other filmmakers and influence new thinking. During the 1930s and 1940s animation had a visionary, Walt Disney. Today it's the independent animators and their films who, collectively, are the artistic leaders of the artform. It's vital to display their work to all in the filmmaking community.

Piotr Dumala, Filmmaker, Lodz, Poland. (Reply came via the Royal College of Art, London).

When I first went to an animation festival, my main impression was that here are so many people doing a million things similar to what I do! Artistic, personal animation is so private, like writing poems. Animators are very special people, rather shy, humble and working on their own. Often they are in their studios with black walls without windows, very concentrated on their slow frame-by-frame work.

Every festival is a big celebration,

a big party where you can meet people similar to you and watch their interior worlds on the big screen with a big audience. This is the second part of the dialogue which you start alone with a camera and your idea. There you can feel and see the reaction of different people, give them the best of what you manage to do. This is very energising and inspiring. New projects, new ideas appear or develop: this is a special time. I think that giving prizes can be a bit dangerous, likes always when people compete. But it gives a dramatic urge to the event and a feeling that artist animators are not in the empty space. Of course, it is very important to get a prize, because it promotes the name of the winner.

Sherry Gunther, Vice President, Hanna-Barbera, Hollywood.

The value of having our animated productions screening at festivals is the exposure amongst the artists' community. There is a prestige associated with film festivals, and particularly when the product is good, it's a good chance to show your work to talent who can get inspired by it and excited about the possibility of working at your studio now or in the future.

Tyrone Montgomery, Montgomery Film, Wuppertal, Germany.

Film festivals were the starting point of my career. My first film *Quest* was screened world-wide and fortunately won a lot of prizes. I got to know filmmakers and companies from all over the world and was offered jobs in the animation industry. Today, I work as director, art director and director of photography. Festivals are the best place to show your films to a professional audience and see many other new

productions.

Françoise Reymond, Director of TV Programs Acquisition & Youth Programming, Canal+, Paris.

It is to give our animated programs the best possible exposure that we present them, with our co-producers, to different international festivals. I think that, in the last few years, we can be proud of the great quality of our French animation.: *Babart*, *Tintin*, *Insektors* and *Once Upon a Time* are the best examples of the great originality of our concepts and our designs, particularly with *Insektors*, where we innovated with the new technology of computer animation. *Insektors*, often awarded prizes at different festivals, in 1994 was given an International Emmy Award in New York. Last month, *Once Upon a Time* was also nominated for an International Emmy Award as the best youth program.

Bob Godfrey, Bob Godfrey Films, Ltd., London.

The value my friend is this . . . If you don't submit animated productions to festivals who is going to know you are alive?

A word of caution, choose your festivals with care—small is not always beautiful!!

We are not talking about money here, if you are interested in money choose another profession. I've been making animation for 40 years and looks as if I'm going to have to borrow the cost of my fare home.

P.S.: Hang about! I've just cottoned on to the full implication of the question. The Internet is going to make festivals unnecessary!!!! I think not—I like meeting filmmakers in the flesh.

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Yvette Kaplan On the Beavis and Butt-head Watch

by Janet Benn

Mike Judge is *Beavis and Butt-head Do America's* director, while Yvette Kaplan is the animation director. Since the film is completely animated, one may ask "What's the difference?" In this case, the answer goes beyond the difference in size and placement of the credits to an instance of real collaboration and shared responsibility for the successful completion of this film.



Mike Judge
© 1996 MTV Networks.

Directing animation is a story of numbers and counting, but also of passion and energy. The numbers

are everywhere: frames, scenes, sequences and clock timings for every tiny hand flick or eye blink for every character in every shot. From the film as a whole down to its separate scenes, each part of the film has to be crafted in time as well as in line. Added to the complexity in this case was the seemingly impossible schedule of less than 12 months from the start of storyboarding to its Christmas 1996 release decided upon by Paramount Pictures.

Mike Judge first created Beavis and Butt-head in his own, independently-made films. Later, he had to convey his vision to a crew of animators through more than 100 five-minute episodes on MTV, and this year, throughout the 75 minutes of the feature film *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*. In this effort, Yvette Kaplan has been his chief collaborator.

Combining intense listening with respect for his vision, Kaplan has internalized Mike Judge's "boys" so well as to be able to make their every move and gesture express their personalities perfectly. Since the middle of the production of the first season of the series in 1992, she has learned all about the characters directly from Mike as he acts out every new situation or difficult line reading for her. It's almost as if

she has become a continuation of the animation lobe in his brain, so that she can almost always decide questions of direction or situation as he would when he's not there.

Since his deal with Fox to create a new series called *King of the Hill*, he has been splitting his time between his home in Austin, Texas (where he has a sound studio for recording voices) and Los Angeles (where the series is being made), while the movie was being made in New York. Although he was present in the early stages and at key points throughout production, having an alter ego in the form of Yvette Kaplan made possible the film's on-time completion.

A Frustrated Actor

Yvette started as an animator nearly 20 years ago at the School of Visual Arts in New York, where she met her artist husband Mark. They have one son, Randall, who is proving to be a formidable creator in his own right, acting both on stage (at school) and on screen (doing voice work on several animated productions including the B&B series) all by the age of 12.

"What I loved about being an animator," she recalls, "was not the actual act of drawing, but the *thinking* [that went into it]. I had an unusual career as an animator,

because I wasn't often directed. People handed me sheets and a track, and I *did* it. I never knew this was unusual.

Directing animation is a story of numbers and counting, but also of passion and energy.

"I guess, I'm a frustrated actor. I have good instincts about who a character is. I can shift gears. I can become different characters."

Kaplan worked as an animator on the pilot for *Doug* for Jumbo Pictures. When the company saw her work, they promoted her to director. Her career has been remarkable in that she has been present at the start of this and two other important television shows: *Beavis and Butt-head* and the PBS series, *The Magic School Bus* (where she acted as a creative consultant).

Visualizing

Yvette began visualizing *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* in November 1995, when the first version of the script was delivered by Mike Judge and Joe Stillman. Going through the script line by line with Mike, she made extensive notes and at times drew little pictures, to better describe their ideas to the storyboard artists. For production management purposes, she broke the film down into 32 sequences, defined mainly by the many locations necessitated by this "road" picture. So began her year of 14-hour days and 7-day work weeks.

Mike Judge began to record the voices of Beavis and Butt-head and many of the other characters he portrays: Tom Anderson, Van Driessen and McVickar, to name a few. Yvette was present at many of these sessions, observing his approach and paying close attention to his comments. Many times, she would have a specific idea in mind for a passage where the action was not really obvious. They would go over it together, and as Yvette says, "I'd have to get into his head, get a picture of how he's picturing it." Often his reaction would spark new ideas in Kaplan's mind, as she states, guiding her "through his intentions in the script."

This creative collaboration was applied to the initial storyboarding of each sequence. These were sent to Mike after Yvette's approval, and usually, he had changes. This back-

came up on the screen and the matching sound track was played, Yvette would likely be the first to act out the scenes again, timing them with a stopwatch. The scenes would then be cut according to her timing and the track changed if necessary. The AVID reel and slugged track were then given to the sequence directors for sheet timing. (Some sequences were done first by the sequence directors, with Yvette's input, and some by Mike himself.)

Sequence Directors



Yvette Kaplan, with son Randall and husband Mark at New York premiere of *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*. Photo by Janet Benn.

and-forth went on for many weeks, and the customary pressure was beginning to be applied by the Storyboard Supervisor as well as the Producer to try to stay on schedule.

The storyboards were then scanned into an AVID editing system. This was the first raw visual material used for timing the action: the dialogue track had previously been put together ("slugged") to Mike's satisfaction. As each panel

Sequence directors were chosen by Yvette according to their demonstrated strengths in working inside the Beavis and Butt-head universe.. Kaplan was responsible for the daily supervision of their work.

Geoffrey Johnson, for example, was largely responsible for the character of Muddy (who tries to get our heroes to "do" his wife, Dallas), his portrayal as directed on the exposure sheets was guided by



Yvette Kaplan (left) with Cartoon Network's Linda Simensky. Photo by Janet Benn.

Yvette's understanding of what Mike wanted. The voice carried much information through the performance Mike had drawn from the actor: intonation and emphasis, even his coughing was important. Given Johnson's proven ability at mastering the details which fill out Muddy's on-screen personality, and tempered by Kaplan's overall grasp of the largely understated B&B acting style, we get a satisfying incorporation of the character into the film.

In addition to Johnson, the special talents of eight other sequence directors were brought together on the film. Chief among these were the three veteran animators, Tony Kluck, Carol Millican and Ilya Skorupsky. As well as directing whole sequences, Tony and Ilya were also storyboard artists and Carol lent her expertise to the Character Layout Department, checking each scene in an effort to achieve the best, most expressive poses. Brian Mulroney, who had achieved other adroit female performances in the past, specialized

in the sequences featuring Dallas. Mike deSeve was our "fight expert," choreographing all of the many squabbles the boys started, as well as some sequences of natural catastrophes.

Miguel Martinez introduced the Feds to Highland, and Ray Kosarin and Paul Sparangano completed the team.

Somewhat separate was the "Hallucination" sequence, directed by Chris Pynoski under Mike Judge's direct supervision, animated at MTV with input from Rob Zombie, on whose artwork and music the sequence was based. This part of the film was always seen as totally different in style and coloration from the rest of the movie and was, in a sense, "experimental."

And so the collaborations continued: Kaplan with the nine sequence directors and with Mike Judge. Often he depended on her sense of timing, especially in the "Wake Up" sequence, where the biggest laughs come from the point-of-view camera shots, where there is virtually no action except for the

camera's roving eye, simulating Butt-head's puzzlement as to where their TV has gone.

It was Kaplan's job to visualize the film once again, this time by reading the exposure sheets done by the sequence directors while listening to the track. "I would see if I was amused, or interested by the way they paced their acting, and if I was satisfied with it. Of course, the same way I couldn't visualize something exactly like Mike, the sequence directors couldn't visualize something exactly like me, unless I had acted it out for them

ahead of time, unless they really internalized it the way I try to internalize what Mike acts out. But then, there were many other times where sequence directors might have done something totally different than what I imagined; but I would give them the respect they deserve by putting aside any of my preconceived notions aside and looking to see 'Does it work?' and 'Is this good? Does it get the point across?' When it did, I was thrilled and approved it wholeheartedly."

Layout To The Finish

In preparation for the layout phase, scene planners analyzed the exposure sheets and storyboards together with the designs worked out by Design Director Sharon Fitzgerald's staff, and the background keys researched and painted under the supervision of Art Director Jeff Buckland. Background layout, headed by Maurice Joyce, came before character posing, which was co-helmed by Paul Sparangano and Bryon Moore, with oversight from Carol Millican, who

had been co-supervising director of the B&B series with Yvette for two years.

Once these Layouts were completed, checked, revised and checked again, they were filmed as a "Leica" reel. "It was like, the next level. 'Okay, now let's see how this times out with *movement!* All right, not full movement because it was just pose-to-pose, based on the layout, but you could see a lot more." This was the first opportunity Kaplan had to see actual artwork, to make revisions to correct bad poses or expressions, and to work further on animation timing.

The pencil tests were not all in before color workprint footage also started to come in. By this time, very few creative animation changes were possible, but there were still animation glitches, color pops, exposure mistakes, and many other technical problems to be noted, analyzed and described in order to be fixed. "That, for me," Yvette said, "is the least creative and least satisfying part of my job. It's hard to watch a scene and still not want to perfect the timing and the acting."

All the post-production was done in Los Angeles, where Yvette

This part of the film was always seen as totally different in style and coloration from the rest of the movie and was, in a sense, "experimental."

was to spend several weeks helping to select the right takes and locking the reels. Mike Judge directed the final edit and the many sound mixes needed to satisfy the Ratings Board as well as himself. Mike had worked with the composer, John Frizzell, on the score, and flew to London to record it with the London Philharmonic. Everything

came together in the week before Thanksgiving, exactly one year since the first version of the script had been delivered to MTV in New York.

A Storyteller

Now that it's all over but the applause (and the inevitable con-



Yvette Kaplan at work on *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*.

Photo by Janet Benn.

troversy), I asked Yvette about her preparation for this job as Animation Director on *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*: "I learned a lot from Mike and the writers, but I always told stories. I used to write myself, I used to make up my own characters. As a kid, I would orchestrate the "pretend play," now 'You're gonna be this, and I'm gonna say this' and I'd write lines for everybody!"

For the first season of *Beavis and Butt-head*, Yvette was called in to give some continuity to the direction across several episodes. Up to that point, the animators were responsible for their own direction, ironically, working much as she had when animating on other projects. Mike Judge was there from the start, but he felt very frustrated at the limitations of the initial low budget, which allowed for only a limited style of animation not to his liking, and not much time to complete even that. Veteran animator Tony Eastman did the storyboards, which

set the pace for the show's visual style based on Mike's original films, and Yvette followed that lead: "My job was to keep it flowing, and alive, without many drawings." Later, when she had begun to collaborate more with Mike, the style would change a bit; but many dedicated B&B fans still point to this first season as their favorite.

Their collaboration began during a storyboard meeting. She had an idea for some comic business which she muttered aloud, mostly to herself. Mike heard it: "The respect that I wouldn't give my own thought," she recalls, "he gave it. And that was when it all clicked for us.

"I knew from our first meeting that he was very clear on who these characters were and that there were things about them that would take me time to learn." It must have been difficult, at first, being new on the scene, and having to deal with all these artists who were interpreting his creation. Then, as Yvette put it "I was one of the lucky ones that he came to trust."

Janet Benn was Scene Planner, Layout Checker and Retake Supervisor on Beavis and Butt-head Do America. She has worked in animation production for 20 years and served on the Steering Committee of the Society for Animation Studies and has been involved in the formation of the New York Chapter of Women in Animation. She has also officiated at ASIFA-East and Women Make Movies, Inc.

The new animated feature, *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* is the perfect waste of time. The kind of spent time that won't keep you up in the middle of the night berating yourself for going—let alone spending the money. And I encourage you to bring a date, or even better all your friends.

The film provokes and challenges the viewer in many ways. One of which is the uneasy realization that Beavis and Butt-head are like family. The kind of family that you're embarrassed to say you're related to. And they make you laugh. Suspiciously, I do not think we're laughing at them. *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* has a keen and sharp eye for capturing the subtleties of behavior. Watching the film is like watching a freak show caricature of everyday people. If the film were shot in live action, this kind of documentation would go unnoticed. I'm rather curious about the kind of ability that could take a couple of hand drawn designs of deep simplicity and drape it over public consciousness like grandmas wool blanket. There is something deeper at work and history holds many examples of the war against traditional values and thought.

Much credit should go to Abby Terkhule, the film's producer, and champion of the talents of Mike Judge during the early days before the series. Judge's work appeared on *Liquid Television* after catching the eye of Colossal Pictures' Prudence Fenton. A very interesting period of time for TV animation, Nickelodeon launched *Ren &*

Stimpy and MTV introduced the world to *Beavis & Butt-head*. The screenplay was written by Mike Judge and Joe Stillman, both experiencing their work being produced for the first time on the big screen.

recovered until the end of the picture, beat up and cast aside in an alley, like the best and the worst of medium. B&B devise ways to replace their television, which leads them to cross paths with an aggressive drunk in a hotel room. The man offers the boys a lot of money to "do my wife." B&B hop on a plane and head to Las Vegas where she is holed up from the law and in possession of a deadly biological device called the "X-5 Unit." The unit is sewn into Beavis' shorts (don't ask why he removed them) and the boys return East across America with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms people in hot pursuit. The action concludes at the White House, in our nation's capitol, where

President Clinton hands out memberships to the ATF. (Is this the first time our

President has been portrayed in an animated film?)

The story is not worth the big screen. B&B role play through the picture. It is unfortunate that they could not break away or even attempt to explore a different aspect of their personalities. Emotionally, they are wind up dolls with a pre-designed set of instructions. This is the only obstacle that keeps B&B flat TV personalities in a medium that pleads for light and dimensionality. There was an opportunity during the middle of the picture to deliver more characterization but it wasn't played out. B&B are stranded out in the desert and they run into their dads, two former roadies who slept with sluts. The reunited dysfunctional family sit

BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD DO AMERICA

by John R. Dilworth

Starting and Ending With Television

The plot of *Beavis and Butt-head*



The boys do Hollywood for *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*
© 1996 MTV Networks.

Do America starts and ends with television. The boys' TV set is stolen while they daydream and is not

around a camp fire and share a few laughs and flatulence. The next morning the fathers disappear and the boys are on their own again.



Beavis (right) and Butt-head groove to the sounds of a Las Vegas hotel lounge act in *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*

© 1996 MTV Networks.

The film's director and creator, Mike Judge, does an adequate job with his first animated feature. The picture's production value is consistent with the television series, and in fact felt like the TV show projected on a big screen. Contemporary animated feature filmgoers conditioned to pristine and polished production values will notice the broken xeroxed pencil lines shimmer on extreme close-ups and dirt on panning cels. The animation drawings wiggle and then hold, then wiggle again in what could be called Trace-backvision.

There are many funny moments in *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*, including the flight to Las Vegas where Beavis pulls his shirt up over his head and breaks into the cockpit acting like a demented terrorist. I also enjoyed the bit of limited intimacy between Beavis and an old woman voiced by Cloris Leachman. Another worthy moment is the highway chase. B&B are locked in the truck of a speeding car. The boys manage to break open the trunk but are left with the dilemma of escaping by having to jump off

the speeding car in the face of oncoming highway traffic, much the way Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid jumped off a cliff when surrounded by the law.

A Healthy Mockery

One sequence actually transcends the picture. B&B have a near death hallucination in the middle of the desert of dancing demons straight out of the world of Hieronymus Bosch. The sequence was based on the artwork of Rob Zombie. This sequence departs from the picture in style and medium, utilizing a digital ink and paint process, provided by Tape House Computer Ink & Paint, and serves as a contrast to the reality B&B inhabit on cel. There is also use of computer assisted design. In one sequence, B&B dance a la *Saturday Night Fever* on a disco floor as the camera pans down from above reminiscent of Belle dancing with the Beast. Another sequence portrays B&B as fire breathing giants destroying a city like a Little Nemo nightmare.

Where the picture really excels is when B&B appear as *Starsky and Hutch*, complete with Afros and

bell-bottoms. There is a wonderful reworking of the Isaac Hayes song, "Shaft," titled "Two Cool Guys" that Mr. Hayes and Mr. Judge collaborated on. This is the freshest and most creative sequence in the picture. In the past, B&B have appeared as various representations on their TV series but the timing, music and total unexpectancy of the opening created a true film experience that is very funny. As turn of the century social critic Benjamin Casseres has suggested, "there is a healthy mockery, a healthy anarchic spirit." And this is why B&B is bril-

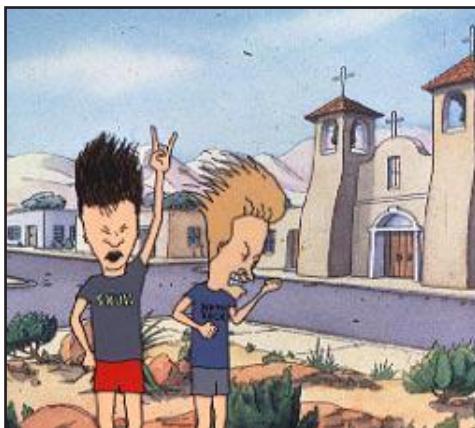
I'm rather curious about the kind of ability that could take a couple of hand drawn designs of deep simplicity and drape it over public consciousness like grandma's wool blanket.

liant.

Beavis and Butt-head Do America should be celebrated. The picture is an immediate departure from the dominating Disney interpretation of animated feature filmmaking. And it is the first contemporary, hand drawn animated feature not trying to use the Disney cinematic form. Whether the creators



Beavis and Butt-head encounter their "dads" in *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*
© 1996 MTV Networks.



**Butt-head and Beavis on the road in
*Beavis and Butt-head Do America***
© 1996 MTV Networks.

are aware of the implications of producing an animated feature whose primitiveness is a bonfire for artistic freedom is questionable. The film does provoke and challenge. Necessary requisites for change.

What are the standards for judging art? *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* forces the viewer to judge it—and its "aesthetic indifference" as Marcel Duchamp put it. Throughout history, artistic thought has struggled against the dominating opinion of the time. An important factor in the experimentation of the arts is a quest for liberation. B&B react against the rigidity of the society, they are the banner holders for counter conformity and against the order that wants to repress them. It is not altogether coincidental that during the turn of the century in Europe, Diaghilev, Nijinsky and Stravinsky, among other collaborators, turned the cul-

tural and artistic world upside down with their "barbarism." Other art movements provoke the same resentment. The Dada movement is another example of the need to challenge and redefine the "bourgeois" beliefs of significance and tradition.

B&B say and do things good little boys and girls were taught, or conditioned, not to do. In an attempt to replace their stolen TV, they defiantly walk away with the school's audiovisual equipment. When reproached by the principal, the two dismiss him as a representation of central authority. Now that B&B can express themselves more openly on film than on television, they explore more fully the frustrations they experience during rigid times. Frustrations of sexuality—B&B are obsessed with "scoring" and



The boys are wanted in *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*
© 1996 MTV Networks.

during a AFT cavity search performed on Butt-head, he believes he has. Interesting how the authority has provided a form of fantasy service through Butt-head's interpretation. The impulse to masturbate, or self-pleasure (or self expression), is also very high regardless if the boys know how to do it. Frustrations of the unconscious and the primitive—the hallucination

sequence in the desert and the opening daydreaming images of strength and vitality—of control. Beavis' lack of reading skills provides the primitiveness among others. The frustrations over homosexuality—Van Driessen sings to his students "Lesbian Seagull." Frustrations over the socially deprived—both fathers of B&B roam the desert, isolated

Emotionally, they are wind up dolls with a predesigned set of instructions.

and forgotten.

Beavis and Butt-head Do America is a funny animated feature cast from a new mold and from a clean slate. It should provide the fuel of liberation to artists and filmmakers who have always believed in alternatives. In a sense, Marshall McLuhans "The medium is the message" recycles itself. Television is what defines our cultural experience. B&B watch television and television watches B&B. *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America* is film by the act of being so, but when the humor slows as it does, look for the message.

Beavis and Butt-head Do America.
MTV for Geffen Pictures in association with Paramount Pictures. Director: Mike Judge. Animation Director: Yvette Kaplan. Written by Mike Judge and Joe Stillman, based on MTV's *Beavis and Butt-head*, created by Judge. Producer: Abby Terkuhle. Co-Producer: John Andrews. Music Score: John Frizzell.

John R. Dilworth is a New York based independent filmmaker whose recent short animated film, The Chicken From Outer Space, was nominated for an Academy Award.

The picture is an immediate departure from the dominating Disney interpretation of animated feature filmmaking.

La Freccia Azzurra (The Blue Arrow)

by Giannalberto Bendazzi

La Freccia Azzurra (*The Blue Arrow*) is a film that uses computers in a highly refined manner; so much so, that one hardly notices. Guided by an electronic brain, its camera is able to execute tracking shots and pans which one only thought possible in a live-action movie; drawn with pixels, the film's characters are seen across 30-40 levels, with each one staying in perfect focus. This is one of the secrets to the basic "lightness" of a film like no other, one which tells an amusing and fun-loving fairy tale set in the 30s, with the touch of a modern electronic storyteller.

The technological aspect, in fact, is probably the main reason why the movie is so important. Having clearly got a late start with respect to other European countries (with France leading the way), Italy has quickly caught up over the past few years in terms of both equipment and professionalism; it has done it in such a way that the small but efficient structure known as *Cartoonia* (based in Turin and Terni) can present its business card as proof that it is able to compete head-to-head with other major European com-

panies that supply digital ink-and-paint and computerized rendering. *Cartoonia*, which took on *The Blue Arrow*, was started in 1992 as an offshoot of Turin's *La Lanterna Magica*, which produced the film.

Enzo d'Alò's production comes up dry, funny and fun, and is often done tongue-in-cheek.

The story line might seem fastidious if given in summary form. On the night of Epiphany, *La Befana* (an old hag who, according to Italian folklore, brings gifts at this time to children who have been nice and charcoal to those who

only wants to please the children of the rich, who have paid a fortune for their toys . . . only these same toys (one of which is a train called "Blue Arrow," hence the film's title) rebel and start a journey to give themselves to the children they choose. This leads to a long series of twists and turns, the last of which is the final—and predictable—defeat of the villain.

Luckily, Enzo d'Alò's production, which is what really counts, comes up dry, funny and fun, and is often done tongue-in-cheek. (Hats off to the voice work, in the Italian version, of Dario Fo as *Scarfoni* and Lella Costa as *Befana*.) It is brought off with the help of Paolo Cardoni's extraordinarily original drawings and production design; an illustrator whose trademarks are the two-dimensional aspect of color and the simplicity of his drawings, Cardoni adapts quite well to the requirements of filmic narrative.

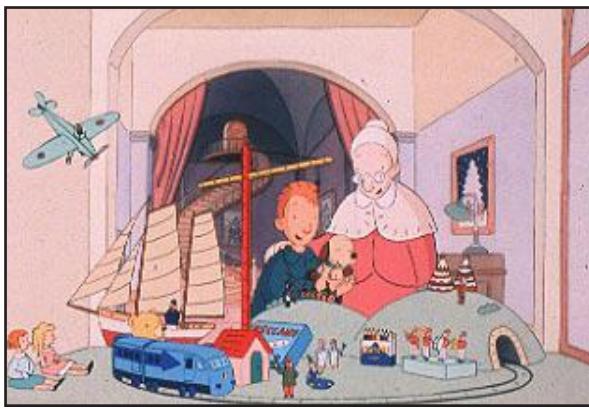


Scarfoni in *La Freccia Azzurra* by Enzo d'Alò.

have been naughty) falls ill and is unable to deliver her presents; her absence plays into the hands of *Scarfoni*, her evil assistant, who

An Act of Courage

An animated feature presented by a country undergoing a serious production crisis (a crisis which is even more endemic in animation) released in Italy in direct competition with Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is certainly an act of courage. It is an act which is important not only for the challenge it



Francesco, La Befana and Giocattoli in *La Freccia Azzurra* by Enzo d'Alò.

presents to the current crisis and its powerful overseas rival, but more importantly for its chosen format. *The Blue Arrow* is, in fact, a genuinely original and autonomous project in the field of animation for children.

Neither Disneyish or anti-Disney, neither an overstated caricature or realistic, neither science-fictional or belligerent, neither tear-jerking (although there is a slight hint of philo-poverty inherited from the Italian leftist cinema of yore), it is a film which tells a fairy tale that is neither canonical or well known, but better yet one that is modern: one in which the fantastic is combined with the realistic, describing, almost stereotypically, the average Italian town (the writers used the Tuscan town of Orbetello as their model). This is a film which tends to shy away from the norm and go its own unique way; and it does so without the least bit of hesitation and with a great deal of perfectionism, professionalism and attention to detail (the film

took more than four years to make). As a matter of fact, *The Blue Arrow* will probably be enjoyed by adults, who will appreciate its "deja vu" feel, apparently put in for those who

have acquired a taste for modernism (of the 30s, implied though not openly stated). Paolo Conte's characteristically strong and elegant music helps evoke this atmosphere.

Taking Pride

Even in its pronounced Italianism, *The Blue Arrow* takes pride in being a European production; the first example, in Italy, of a frame-by-frame feature film conceived, grown and nurtured by the major European Community's organizations which promote member co-productions. The Italian companies La Lanterna Magica and Eta Beta joined foreign co-producers such as Switzerland's Fama Film and Luxembourg's Monipoly, while artists in places such as Spain, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Denmark (400 in all) were used (the unity of style was accomplished by the rigorous supervision of the Turin-based director of animation, Silvio Pautasso).

There is no doubt that the film's mood and style are tied to the tra-

Rodari, who wrote the original story and is one of Europe's greatest writers of children's literature, made it all possible—though the reaction of various European audiences (the film has already been released in Germany and Switzerland) seems to indicate that it has honed in to the wavelengths of both adolescents and children.

The film's mood and style are tied to the traditions of European auteur animation, while there is a complete absence of the usual Hollywood or Broadway influence.

One question remains: What role will *The Blue Arrow* play in Italian theatrical animation? We don't yet know the box office results yet, but perhaps it will mark the end of sporadic, improvised and often unfulfilling productions. La Lanterna Magica has already scheduled a TV series based on the film; also, the Lega della Cooperativa has proposed, in Turin, a project to be funded by both municipal and regional governments: an animation center in the royal city, consisting of production, research and most importantly professional educational facilities. While the animation industries around the world have been rapidly expanding, and now Italy, if it does not get bogged down with the usual inertia, may have reached the turning point where it can join the rest of the world.



La Freccia Azzurra by Enzo d'Alò.

ditions of European auteur animation, while there is a complete absence of the usual Hollywood or Broadway influence. All of this, under the umbrella of Gianni

***La Freccia Azzurra (The Blue Arrow)*.** Adapted from an original story by Gianni Rodari. Screenplay: Enzo d'Alò and Umberto Marino. Director of Animation: Silvio Pautasso. Executive Producer: Maria Fares. Director: Enzo d'Alò. Italy-Switzerland-Luxembourg, 1996.

La Freccia Azzurra

di Giannalberto Bendazzi

Usa il computer in maniera raffinatissima, questo film: così raffinata che quasi non si vede. Guidata dal cervello elettronico, la sua macchina da presa compie carellate ed evoluzioni che sarebbero possibili solo nel cinema "dal vero"; disegnati dai pixel, i suoi personaggi arrivano a disporsi su 30-40 livelli in profondità di campo, rimanendo tutti perfettamente a fuoco. È questo uno dei segreti della fondamentale leggerezza di un film che non assomiglia a nessun altro, e che riesce a narrare una divertente e gentile fiaba ambientata negli anni Trenta Cinquanta con la modernità di un cantastorie elettronico.

E l'aspetto tecnologico è probabilmente la prima ragione per cui questo film è importante in questo momento. Partito in netto ritardo rispetto ad altre cinematografie d'animazione del continente (quella francese in testa), negli ultimi anni il nostro Paese ha saputo recuperare in termini di macchinario e di professionalità, sì che oggi la piccola ma efficiente struttura denominata Cartoonia (una sede a Torino

e una a Terrnì) può presentare questo biglietto da visita per testimoniare di essere in grado di battersi ad armi pari con le altre mag-



La Befana and Scarafoni in *La Freccia Azzurra* by Enzo d'Alò.

giori società europee che forniscono coloritura elettronica e ripresa computerizzata. Cartoonia, che appunto si è fatta carico della lavorazione de *La Freccia Azzurra*, è nata nel 1992 da una costola della società torinese La Lanterna Magica, cioè della produttrice del film.

La cui storia, a riassumerla e basta, potrebbe gelare le vene, per la sua leziosità. La notte dell'Epifania, la Befana non può portare in giro i doni perché è ammalata, e rischia di lasciare il gioco nelle mani del suo perfido assistente Scarafoni, il quale vuole accontentare solo i bambini ricchi, quelli che hanno pagato i giocattoli fior di denari . . . solo che

i giocattoli stessi (e fra loro un trenino chiamato Freccia Azzurra, che dà il titolo al film) si ribellano e si mettono in marcia per donarsi ai bambini che preferiscono, innescando così una lunga serie di snodi narrativi nonché la finale—e immaginabile—sconfitta del truffatore. Per fortuna la realizzazione firmata da Enzo d'Alò, che è ciò che conta, risulta asciutta, divertita e divertente, spesso autoironica (*coup de chapeau* al doppiaggio di Dario Fo-Scarfoni e di Lella Costa-Befana) e descritta con straordinaria originalità dai disegni e dalle scenografie di Paolo Cardoni, un illustratore che della semplificazione del tratto e della bidimensionalità del colore si era fatto un marchio di fabbrica, e che qui si mostra particolarmente malleabile nell'adattarsi alle necessità della narrazione cinematografica.

Un lungometraggio d'animazione, dunque, proposto da un



La Freccia Azzurra by Enzo d'Alò.



Francesco in *La Freccia Azzurra* by Enzo d'Alò.

Paese in grave crisi produttiva (crisi che, nel campo specifico del disegno in movimento, è per di più endemica) e proprio in diretta concorrenza, sugli schermi, con il gigante in arrivo *Il gobbo di Notre Dame* della Walt Disney. L'atto di coraggio non è significativo soltanto per la sfida contro la congiuntura e contro l'agguerrito rivale d'oltre-oceano, ma anche e soprattutto per la formula scelta. *La Freccia Azzurra*, in effetti, è un lavoro genuinamente originale e autonomo nel campo dell'animazione per ragazzi. Né disneyano né antidisneyano; né caricaturale né realistico; né fantascientifico né guerresco né strapalacrime (anche se non manca qualche sfumatura filo-poveristica ereditata dal cinema di sinistra di una volta). È un film che narra una fiaba non canonica e non celebre, ma anzi moderna e nella quale il fantastico si combina molto sostanziosamente con il realistico, descrivendo addirittura quasi planimetricamente la cittadina media italiana nella quale si svolge. (Il modello ideale a cui gli autori si sono riferiti è stata in concreto Orbetello). È un film, in sostanza, che ha il pregio di svincolarsi dalle mode e di percorrere una sua via personale, senza la minima timidezza e anzi con il massimo immaginabile di perfezionismo, professionalità, acribia

(la lavorazione è durata oltre quattro anni). Tra l'altro risulterà probabilmente gradevole anche per gli adulti, ai quali non dovrebbe dispiacere quel suo sapore vagamente rétro, quasi fatto apposta per chi può aver sviluppato simpatia per il modernariato (gli anni Trenta, non dichiarati ma palesi).

A questa atmosfera dà un apporto decisivo la musica caratterizzata, forte ed elegante di Paolo Conte.

Pur nel suo spiccatamente italiano, *La Freccia Azzurra* ha la particolarità di essere un prodotto europeo; il primo esempio, in casa nostra, di lungometraggio immagine-per-immagine nato, cresciuto, caldeggiauto all'ombra delle grandi organizzazioni della Cee che promuovono la co-produzione comunitaria. Le italiane Lanterna Magica ed Eta Beta si sono associate a coproduttori stranieri come l'elvetica Fama Film e la lussemburghese Monopoly, e il lavoro vero e proprio di animazione si è svolto anche in altri Paesi come la Spagna e il Portogallo, la Repubblica Ceca e la Danimarca, per un totale di 400 disegnatori o scenografi di differente passaporto (anche se l'unità dello stile è stata poi sempre garantita dall'esigente direttore dell'animazione torinese Silvio Pautasso). Non c'è dubbio poi che lo stile e il tono del

film siano legati alla tradizione europea del cinema d'animazione d'autore, e che vi manchi invece del tutto la così frequente impronta hollywoodiana o broadwaiana. Tutto questo, unito al nome di Gianni Rodari, padre del racconto originario e gloria della letteratura europea per ragazzi, fa sì che dalla risposta dei diversi pubblici del continente (la distribuzione è già iniziata in Germania e in Svizzera) si potrà anche verificare come i giovani e i giovanissimi di questo emisfero rispondano a un'esposizione fatta esplicitamente per loro.

Resta da domandarsi che cosa significhi *La Freccia Azzurra* per il cinema d'animazione italiano. Forse (ma la risposta, questo è ovvio, è legata strettamente agli esiti del botteghino) può significare la fine delle produzioni sporadiche, volontaristiche, talora velleitarie. La Lanterna Magica ha già in programma un serial tratto dal film, oltre a numerose altre iniziative per le sale e per il piccolo schermo, e la Lega delle Cooperative ha presentato a Torino un progetto che le autorità pubbliche della città e della regione hanno mostrato di condividere: la nascita di un vero e proprio polo del cinema d'animazione nella città sabauda, fatto di produzione, servizi, ricerca e soprattutto scuole per l'addestramento professionale. È un fatto che l'animazione in tutto il mondo è in espansione impetuosa, e l'occasione, se non verrà sprecata per le sempre possibili inerzie, può essere quella buona.



Scarafoni in *La Freccia Azzurra* by Enzo d'Alò.

La Freccia Azzurra. Soggetto: da un racconto di Gianni Rodari. Sceneggiatura: Enzo d'Alò e Umberto Marino. Direttore dell'animazione: Silvio Pautasso. Produttore esecutivo: Maria Fares. Regia: Enzo d'Alò. Italia-Svizzera-Lussemburgo, 1996.

Waiting for Hugo



by Arnaud Laster

Although *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was reviewed by William Mortiz in our July 1996 issue, we thought it would be interesting to also get the reaction of a leading Victor Hugo scholar when it opened in France in late November. Arnaud Laster is not only a leading authority on Hugo, he has also written extensively on poet Jacques Prévert, whose prolific screenwriting career even encompassed animation.

When you love, as I do, the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo, what can you expect from its adaptation by the Disney Studios under the traditional English-language title *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*? I should specify up front that I have just seen the animated feature once, and in a dubbed French version, which is the only way you can see it in Paris, since no theater offers the original version (meaning that the distributors foresee an audience primarily of children, and in no case of adult movie fans). Now it is not inconceivable to interest an exacting adult audience in an animated feature: the success of the masterpiece by Jacques Prévert and Paul Grimault *Le Roi et l'oiseau* (*The*

King and Mr. Bird) proved that.

To go immediately to the main point, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, as I discovered, seems much less an adaptation from the Hugo novel than from a cinematic predecessor, the famous American version directed by William Dieterle in 1939. The music behind the titles already gives the first clue. The function of the Judge devolved onto Frollo, whose original status as Archdeacon is again transferred to a benevolent ecclesiastic, is a second one. You will note that in 1996 everything is

by the enforced obligation of continence and celibacy imposed on clergy by the Catholic church. Victim

You will note that in 1996 everything is still done as if it were impossible to present a priest character who does wrong.

of this interdict, horrified by his own sexuality, he can no longer bear to witness that of others and persecutes Love; the cry of the flesh is so imperious that he makes recourse

to blackmail, becomes guilty of attempted rape and, being' unable to possess the object of his desire, ends by rejoicing in seeing Esmeralda delivered to the executioner. We bet that concern about sparing children the evocation of such torments is opportunistically added to the preoccupation with not shocking the devotees of a religion that is still powerful in

the United States and elsewhere. The obsession of Frollo nonetheless inspires one sequence that I found aesthetically the most beautiful and which, exceptionally, uses with talent the specific resources of anima-



Esméralda greeting Quasimodo during the Festival of the Fools.

© Walt Disney Pictures

still done as if it were impossible to present a priest character who does wrong. This self-censorship robs the work of one of its strongest tensions: the monstrosity of Frollo results in effect from the repression caused



Esmeralda and Phoebus in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

© Walt Disney Pictures

tion: that in which flames escaping from a chimney near the redoubtable judge form the image of Esmeralda.

The makers of the animated feature have clung faithfully to the Dieterle film in which the respect for him whom the media still often call "The Holy Father" leads to crowning Quasimodo not (as in Hugo) the "Pope of Fools" but rather the "King of Fools". On the other hand, they did not keep the King Louis XI of Dieterle's film, who is idealized to the point of becoming the bearer of Hugo's own convictions, which constitutes not only a violation of the character in the novel but also a transgression against Hugo's own anti-monarchy tendencies which were already strong at the time he wrote *Notre Dame*. They have substituted for him a sort of sovereign of the Court of Miracles, Clopin Trouillefou, in whom they invested the function of narrator, which he hardly merits. Furthermore they have given him the appearance of a kind of Cyrano de Bergerac, such as Edmond Rostand caricatured him, and it is this rather un-Gothic silhouette that stars on the film's posters, a sort of unwitting anti-publicity. Hugo himself did quite the opposite in his own adaptation of the novel to an opera libretto (music by Louise Bertin): he made Clopin the accomplice of Frollo.

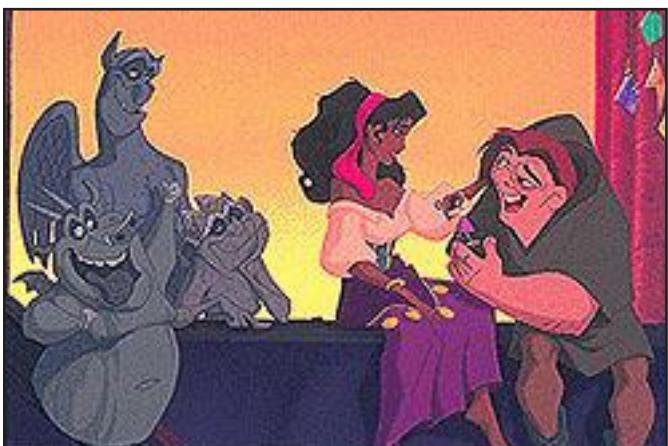
Nothing But Kindness and Devotion

Physically, Quasimodo seems to me hardly more successful: the character created by Charles Laughton seems to have served as model, but the ugliness that rendered it so interesting, indeed fascinating, has been attenuated to the point of being almost meaningless. This poor hunchback is nothing but kindness and devotion, while in the Hugo novel his deformity and deafness having engendered general repulsion and isolation, he behaves like a nasty dog at the service of his (adoptive) father and master, until that moment on the pillory when Esmeralda gives him a drink and he sheds his first tear. That sublime scene, charged with emotion and bearing one of the main meanings of the novel, since the compassion shown by Esmeralda not only opens and changes the heart of Quasimodo but also communicates to the populace, has lost its power because the authors of the cartoon don't have enough confidence in their own emotional feeling.

Nonetheless Esmeralda's accusation of Frollo "You mistreat this man as you mistreat a people" belongs to an up-dated interpretation directly inherited from that proposed by Dieterle's film on the eve of war in 1939. The persecution of the Gypsies and of Quasimodo have in common to be directed against their obvious difference, whose superficial character is justly underlined. Here, at least, you recover one of the dimensions

of the novel which most portended what was to come, in that it establishes Hugo's future battles and reinforces the struggle against the racism of the end of his own century and that of ours.

Captain Phoebus, with his blonde beard and his completely banal face, totally lacks seductiveness, his sole trump in the novel. Here he is supposed to be just returned from a war in which he was distinguished, but instead of behaving like a disciplined soldier and without the martial soul of the novel's character, he thwarts the repressive zeal of the police, demands that Frollo shorten Quasimodo's suffering, and claims the right of asylum for Esmeralda. By means of reducing the characters to stereotypes, this adaptation involuntarily makes, once again, the most striking demonstration of Hugo's originality in contrast to the codes of melodrama. In the novel, this young hero has only a good military bearing and no true emotional depth; as far as Frollo is concerned, it is a sincere act of charity, not constrained or forced, that leads him to rescue the sickly abandoned baby whom he names Quasimodo—and it is through cowardice that he fails to save Quasimodo from the pillory, not, as



The gargoyles (Hugo, Victor, Laverne) with Quasimodo and Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

© Walt Disney Pictures

in the cartoon, in order to teach him a lesson. By making the characters conform to conventional figures of generous hero and completely evil villain, the script of the animated feature measures exactly how wrong it is to accuse Hugo of being simplistic black-and-white.

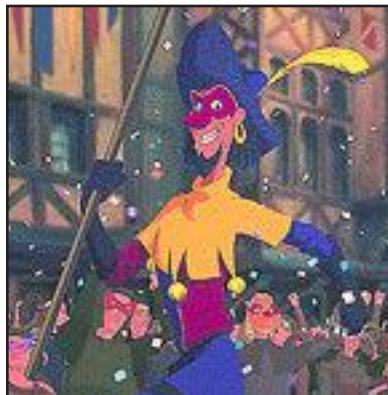
Without daring to connect Frollo's cruelty explicitly with religious fanaticism, the animated feature still makes you think of it momentarily, and that's to its credit.

The Best of American Mentality

This sort of simplification doesn't only lead to drawbacks and shortcomings. In Dieterle's lineup of characters, Frollo ends up condensing in himself the most abominable traits of 20th-century criminals, the war crimes and crimes against humanity, those who ordered the massacres at Ouradour and Vietnam, the genocides and ethnic purifications. Hugo himself prefigured this distantly with the protagonist of a too-little-known drama that he wrote almost 40 years later, *Torquemada*, the Grand Inquisitor, an emblematic figure of what today is called "right-wing fanaticism". Without daring to connect Frollo's cruelty explicitly with religious fanaticism, the animated feature still makes you think of it momentarily, and that's to its credit. Similarly Phoebus' refusal to obey, "My role as a soldier isn't to kill innocent people", and his discharge from the army (discreetly suggested) give validation, for the audience of children, to a type of non-conformist behavior. One discovers here the best of American mentality, quite in accordance with Hugo: their capacity to say "no" to a law and

order which scorn justice and liberty. The revolt against the iniquitous judge and against injustice reigning in the person of the minister of justice Frollo is one of the too rare exalting moments of the film. In Paris that inevitably reminded us of the Africans with no identification papers, not so long ago, who took refuge in a church, and the door was chopped down to seize them for questioning.

The final scenes, diverging more than in any preceding versions, from the ending planned by Hugo, falls back on clichés. In consistent evil, Frollo wants to stab Quasimodo, but Esmeralda is there to save her friend, and then Phoebus catches him in flight. The



Clopin Trouillefou, narrator of The Hunchback of Notre Dame
© Walt Disney Pictures

only point in common with the novel is the fall of Frollo from the high towers of Notre-Dame, but not indeed because of Quasimodo, since undoubtedly the authors did not want to tarnish his unvarying kindness by making him push his master to his death. There couldn't be a more conventional "Happy End": the pretty Esmeralda (she is undeniably pretty, and so much more, just as Hugo had imagined her) marries the handsome Phoebus (or whoever that creature really is) under the touching gaze of Quasimodo. In Dieterle's version, Phoebus did not escape Frollo's dag-

ger, and it is a character omitted from the animated film, the poet Gringoire (a bearer of Hugo's sentiments in a different register from King Louis XI) who wins Esmeralda's love, and the happy couple leave behind them the poor Quasimodo, dreaming of becoming stone like the gargoyles. That was not satisfactory and even bluntly disappointing, the animated happy end leaves one still further from the last pages of the novel with its double tragic ending, ironically represented by two marriages: that of Phoebus with his noble lady Fleur-de-Lys, and that poignant "wedding" of Quasimodo desperately clutching the corpse of Esmeralda even in death. Perhaps it needed a poet like Jacques Prévert (in the adaptation that was filmed in 1956 by Jean Delannoy) to have Hugo's "grotesque" and "sublime" last sentence about Quasimodo spoken on the soundtrack: "When they tried to detach him from the skeleton that he embraced, it fell into dust."

—Translated from the French by
William Moritz

Arnaud Laster, Master of Lectures in French Literature at the New Sorbonne (University of Paris III), author of books on Victor Hugo (of which *Pleins feux sur Victor Hugo* was published by the Comédie-Française) and co-editor, with Danièle Gasiglia-Laster, of the complete works of Jacques Prévert in the *Pléiade* edition. He teaches notably the relation of cinema and music with the works of Victor Hugo, and analyzes the screenplays and dialogues of Prévert.

En attendant Hugo



par Arnaud Laster

Bien que William Moritz ait déjà fait une critique du Bossu du Notre Dame dans notre numéro de juillet 1996, nous avons pensé qu'il serait intéressant de publier la réaction d'un spécialiste de l'oeuvre de Victor Hugo à l'occasion de la sortie du film en France le 27 novembre dernier. Arnaud Laster est également l'auteur d'ouvrages sur Jacques Prévert, dont l'abondante carrière de scénariste a aussi couvert le cinéma l'animation.

Quand on aime, comme moi, le roman de Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, que penser de son adaptation par les studios Disney, sous le titre, traditionnel en langue anglaise, *Le Bossu de Notre-Dame*? Je dois d'abord préciser que je n'ai vu le dessin animé qu'une seule fois et dans sa version française, la seule qu'on puisse voir à Paris, aucun cinéma ne proposant la version originale, ce qui prouve à l'évidence que le public visé par les distributeurs est surtout celui des enfants et en aucun cas celui des cinéphiles. Or il n'est pas inconcevable d'intéresser des adultes exigeants à un

dessin animé: la réussite du chef-d'oeuvre de Jacques Prévert et Paul Grimault, *Le Roi et l'Oiseau*, en témoigne.

Pour aller tout de suite à l'essentiel, *Le Bossu de Notre-Dame*, tel que je viens de le découvrir, m'apparaît beaucoup moins une adaptation du roman de Hugo que de sa précédente et fameuse version cinématographique américaine, réalisée en 1939 par William Dieterle. La musique du générique en fournit un premier indice. La fonction de Juge dévolue à Claude Frollo et son statut originel d'archidiacre transféré à un ecclésiastique bienveillant en constituent deux autres, plus révélateurs encore. On notera qu'en 1996 encore tout se passe comme s'il

était impossible de présenter un personnage de prêtre malfaisant. Cette censure prive l'oeuvre d'une de ses tensions les plus fortes: la monstruosité de Frollo résulte en effet du refoulement auquel le contraint l'obligation de continence et de célibat imposée au clergé d'occident par l'Eglise catholique. Victime de cet interdit, horrifié de sa propre sexualité, il en vient à ne plus supporter celle des autres et à persécuter l'amour; l'appel de la chair se fait si impérieux qu'il a recours au chantage, se rend coupable d'une tentative de viol et, faute de pouvoir posséder l'objet de son désir, finit par se réjouir de voir Esmeralda livrée au bourreau. Gageons que le souci d'épargner aux enfants l'évocation de

tel tourments s'est opportunément ajouté à la préoccupation de ne pas choquer les adeptes d'une religion toujours puissante aux Etats-Unis et ailleurs. L'obsession de Frollo inspire tout de même une séquence, que j'ai trouvée esthétiquement la plus belle et qui, exceptionnellement, use avec talent des moyens spécifiques du dessin animé: celle où les flammes qui s'échappent



Esmeralda greeting Quasimodo during the Festival of the Fools.
© Walt Disney Pictures



Esméralda et Phoebus dans le Bossu de Notre Dame.

© Walt Disney Pictures

d'une cheminée auprès de laquelle se tient le redoutable juge, dessinent la forme d'Esmeralda.

Les auteurs du dessin animé ont poussé la fidélité au film de Dieterle ou le respect de celui que les médias continuent fréquemment d'appeler "le Saint-Père" jusqu'à couronner en Quasimodo non, comme chez Hugo, un "pape" des fous mais un "roi". En revanche, ils n'ont pas conservé le Louis XI du film de Dieterle, idéalisé au point de devenir le porte-parole de Hugo, ce qui était à la fois une infidélité au roman et aux tendances antimonarchiques du romancier, déjà bien sensibles à l'époque de *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Ils lui ont substitué en quelque sorte un souverain de la Cour des Miracles, Clopin Trouillefou, et l'ont investi d'une fonction de narrateur qu'il ne méritait guère. De plus, ils lui ont donné l'allure d'une espèce de Cyrano de Bergerac, tel qu'Edmond Rostand l'a caricaturé, et c'est sa silhouette bien peu gothique qui tient la vedette sur les affiches, en une sorte de contre-publicité involontaire. Hugo l'avait traité tout autrement dans sa propre adaptation du roman en livret d'opéra (musique de Louise Bertin): il avait fait de Clopin un complice de Frollo.

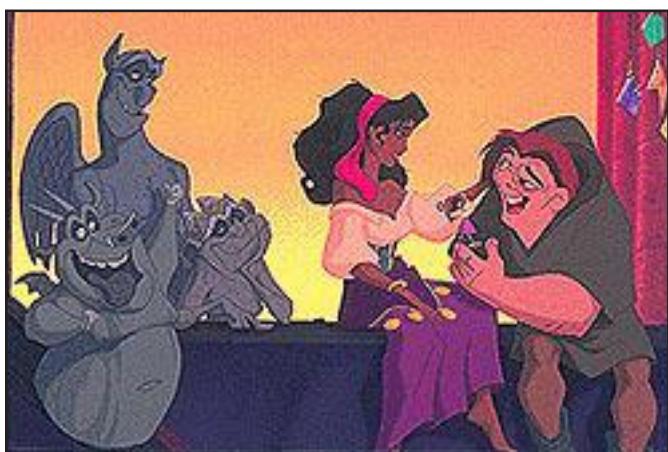
Physiquement, Quasimodo ne me paraît guère mieux réussi: le

personnage composé par Charles Laughton semble avoir servi de modèle mais la laideur qui le rendait si intéressant, voire fascinant, a été atténuée jusqu'à l'é dulcoration. Le pauvre bossu n'est plus que gentillesse et dévouement, alors que dans le roman de Hugo, sa diffor mité et sa surdité, lui ayant attiré la répulsion générale et l'ayant isolé, il se comporte en chien méchant au service de son père (adoptif) et maître, jusqu'au moment où, sur le pilori, Esmeralda lui ayant donné à boire, il verse sa première larme. Cette scène sublime, chargée d'émotion et porteuse d'une des significations majeures du roman -puisque la compassion, témoignée par Esmeralda, non seulement ouvre le cœur de Quasimodo et le change mais également se com munique aussitôt à la foule- perd de sa puissance parce qu'elle ne fait pas assez confiance à la sensibilité.

Cependant la mise en accusa tion de Frollo -"Vous maltraitez cet homme comme vous maltraitez un peuple"- que l'épisode inspire à Esmeralda s'inscrit dans une inter prétation actualisante, directement héritée de celle que proposait le film de Dieterle à la veille de la guerre de 1939. La persécution des Gitans et celle de Quasimodo ont en commun de viser des différences dont le caractère superficiel est à juste titre souligné. En cela au moins on retrouve une des dimensions du roman les plus porteuses d'avenir, par la suite que lui don

neront les futurs combats de Hugo et par le renfort qu'elle n'a cessé d'apporter à la lutte contre les racismes de la fin de son siècle et du nôtre.

Le capitaine Phoebus, avec sa barbiche blonde et son visage d'une banalité complète, manque totalement de séduction, son seul atout dans le roman. Il est censé ici revenir d'une guerre où il s'est distingué mais, au lieu d'agir en soldat discipliné et sans état d'âme comme dans le roman, il contre carre le zèle répressif des gendarmes, demande à Frollo d'abréger le supplice de Quasimodo, revendique pour Esmeralda le droit d'asile. A force de ramener les personnages à des stéréotypes, l'adaptation, involon tairement, fait une fois de plus la démonstration la plus éclatante de l'originalité de Hugo par rapport aux codes du mélodrame: dans le roman, le jeune premier n'a qu'une belle prestance et aucun sentiment véritable; quant à Frollo, c'est par un mouvement sincère de charité, et non contraint et forcé, qu'il a recueilli l'enfant abandonné et infirme auquel il a donné pour nom Quasimodo, et c'est par lâcheté, et non pour lui donner une leçon qu'il ne vient pas au sec



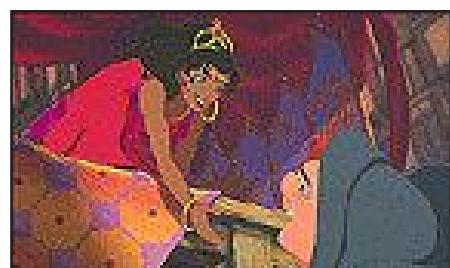
Les Gargouilles avec Quasimodo et Esmeralda dans Le

Bossu de Notre Dame

© Walt Disney Pictures

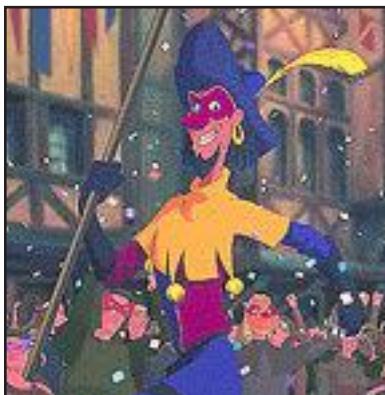
ours de Quasimodo lorsque celui-ci est au pilori. Par la mise en conformité des personnages avec les figures conventionnelles du héros généreux ou du méchant intégral le scénario du dessin animé permet de mesurer combien l'on a été injuste en taxant Hugo de manichéisme.

Ce raidissement des oppositions n'a pas que des inconvénients: dans la ligne du personnage de Dieterle, Frollo finit par condenser en lui les traits des plus abominables criminels du XXe siècle, ceux qui cumulent le crime de guerre et le crime contre l'humanité, qui ordonnent les massacres d'Oradour et du Viet-Nam, les génocides et la purification ethnique. Chez Hugo lui-même il préfigurait lointainement le protagoniste d'un drame trop méconnu qu'il écrira près de quarante ans plus tard, *Torquemada*, le grand inquisiteur, figure emblématique de ce qu'aujourd'hui l'on appelle intégrisme. Sans oser rattacher explicitement la cruauté de Frollo au fanatisme religieux, le dessin animé y fait penser par instants et cela est méritoire. De même que le refus de Phoebus d'obéir -"Mon rôle de soldat n'est pas de tuer des innocents"- et sa démission de l'armée, discrètement suggérée, prennent valeur, à l'usage d'enfants, d'exemples d'un type de comportement non conformiste. On retrouve là le meilleur de l'esprit américain, accordé à celui de



Esmeralda & Quasimodo.
© Walt Disney Pictures

Hugo, leur capacité de dire non à l'ordre et à la loi lorsqu'ils bafouent le droit et la liberté. La révolte contre le juge inique et contre l'injustice régnante en la personne du ministre de la justice qu'est ici Frollo est un des trop rares moments exaltants du film. Cela sonne à Paris comme une revanche des Africains



Clopin Trouillefou, narrateur du Bossu de
Notre-Dame
© Walt Disney Pictures

sans-papiers réfugiés, il y a peu, dans une église dont on força les portes à coups de hache pour les interPELLER.

Le dénouement, en s'écartant plus que dans toutes les versions précédentes, de la fin prévue par Hugo, retombe dans les clichés. En méchant conséquent, Frollo veut poignarder Quasimodo, mais Esmeralda est là pour retenir son ami au-dessus de l'abîme, puis Phoebus pour le rattraper au vol. Seul point commun avec le roman, la chute de Frollo du haut des tours de Notre-Dame, mais non point du fait de Quasimodo dont on n'a sans doute pas voulu ternir l'inaltérable gentillesse en lui faisant jeter son maître dans l'abîme. Happy end on ne peut plus conventionnelle: la jolie Esmeralda - jolie elle l'est indéniablement et tant mieux, Hugo l'a bien imaginée ainsi — et le beau Phoebus — ou qui devrait l'être- se marient sous l'oeil attendri de Quasimodo. Chez Dieterle, Phoebus ne réchappait

pas du coup de poignard de Frollo et c'est un personnage non retenu par le dessin animé, Gringoire, promu porte-parole de Hugo dans un autre registre que celui du roi Louis XI, qui gagnait l'amour d'Esmeralda, et le couple laissait derrière lui le pauvre Quasimodo, rêvant d'être de pierre comme une gargouille. Ce n'était déjà guère satisfaisant et même carrément décevant mais, cette fois, on est encore plus loin des dernières pages du roman et de sa double fin tragique, représentée ironiquement par deux mariages: celui de Phoebus avec sa noble fiancée Fleur-de-Lys et celui, poignant, de Quasimodo avec le cadavre d'Esmeralda, désespérément étreint. Peut-être fallait-il un poète comme Jacques Prévert pour faire entendre, dans l'adaptation que réalisa Jean Delannoy en 1956, la sublime dernière phrase de Hugo, à propos de Quasimodo: "Quand on voulut le détacher du squelette qu'il embrassait, il tomba en poussière".

Arnaud Laster, maître de conférences de Littérature française à la Sorbonne Nouvelle (Université Paris III), auteur de livres sur Victor Hugo (dont *Pleins feux sur Victor Hugo*, publié par la Comédie-Française) et responsable, avec Danièle Gasiglia-Laster, de l'édition des Oeuvres complètes de Jacques Prévert dans la Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, enseigne notamment les relations du cinéma et de la musique avec l'œuvre de Hugo et analyse les scénarios et dialogues de Prévert

MARS ATTACKS!

With the recent revelation by NASA that a crashed meteorite seems to indicate the existence of life on Mars, the timing of the release of the new Warner Bros. film *Mars Attacks!* makes the scientific discovery seem like an outrageous publicity stunt.

Coincidence aside, the latest project from director Tim Burton, *Mars Attacks!* is an over-the-top alien extravaganza based on an obscure series of trading cards originally published by the Topps Chewing Gum Company in 1962. Also inspired by low-budget B-movie science fiction flicks of the time, Burton explains his motivation to create the film: "I wanted to do something fun, [make] the kind of movies I grew up watching. Growing up on all those movies about Martians with big brains sort of stays with you forever."

Maybe it's the fact that I've already seen the film three times, but it seems that Burton's vision will, as he says, stay with me forever. Upon first viewing, in fact, I felt that the images were too graphic, particularly the scenes in which the Martians burned hordes of unsuspecting humans to a crisp with reckless abandon. But looking at the

imagery from an artistic perspective, I just had to admire the spectacular production design and effects. And while I wasn't busy analyzing the

apocalyptic comedy gave me an unnerving yet calm feeling of acceptance of this extremist fantasy of universal evolution. I just have to wonder: What would Darwin think?

It Started With Stop-Motion

From the start, Burton had always envisioned the Martians in the film being animated with the type of stop-motion techniques used in his earlier films *Vincent*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *James and the Giant Peach*. The animation was originally intended to be done by Burton's previous collaborators at Skellington Productions, but Henry Selick and company were still busy working on *James and the Giant Peach*. So, while still in the initial stages of screenplay and visual development, Burton turned to artists in Manchester, England.

To create the intricate Martian puppets, Burton contracted the services of model makers Ian

Mackinnon and Peter Saunders, whose credits include the creation of puppets for Paul Berry's Academy Award-winning stop motion



Sketch by Tim Burton for *Mars Attacks!*
© 1996 Tim Burton, from *Mars Attacks! The Art of the Movie* by Karen R. Jones.

animation techniques, the action had me on the edge of my seat, either grinning or slack-jawed. At once horrifying and hilarious, the



The President (Jack Nicholson) is confronted by a Martian in Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!*

© 1996 Warner Bros.

short *The Sandman*. Mackinnon noted that, "It seemed a rather brave route to be taking, but Tim has always been a great believer in the artistry of puppet animation." Within a few weeks, Mackinnon and Saunders had amassed a large team of sculptors working in L.A. and the U.K., who were busy building hundreds of identical 15-inch Martian puppets. Mackinnon, overseeing production in Los Angeles, was soon joined by contemporary master puppet animator Barry Purves, creator of such festival award-winning short films as *Next*, *Screenplay* and *Achilles*. With Purves acting as animation director, elaborate sets were constructed and filming began. "We spent months working on bizarre little Martian gestures and ways of moving," Purves recalled. "The animation tests were looking good and suitably creepy." But the newly formed "dream studio" of a stop-motion facility, dubbed "Stickman" was short-lived.

Reality Attacks!

In November 1995, Warner Bros. decided that the time and technical demands of blending stop-motion animation convincingly with live-action were just too challenging a task to be dealt with in the year left before the film's sched-

uled release. And so, nine months into the stop-motion production, the model animation team was dispensed with and replaced by 3D computer animation. (Purves gives a first hand account of this experience in the April '96 issue of *Animation World Magazine*.) Not all of the model work was done in vain. Movements and gestures developed by Purves' team were adapted to the computer characters. Mackinnon and Saunders' puppets were digitally scanned and rendered into computer models, while the 15-inch puppets were cast into enlarged full-scale Martians to be used in several of the film's live-action scenes.

Enter Industrial Light and Magic, creators of some of the most stun-

ning visual effects in recent years, including *Jurassic Park*, *Jumanji*, *The Mask*, *Death Becomes Her* and *Terminator 2*. ILM's visual effects supervisor, Jim Mitchell notes: "We were really excited about working with Tim because of his animation background and strong sense of design." Working under Mitchell were nearly 60 full-time ILM staff creating all of the Martian character sequences in the film; twenty animators choreographed the Martians' movements, while 27 technical directors generated the texture and lighting effects for each frame and ten match-movers placed the characters in perspective in the 3D digital environment.

At once horrifying and hilarious, the apocalyptic comedy gave me an unnerving yet calm feeling of acceptance of this extremist fantasy of universal evolution.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros.' newly formed visual effects facility, Warner Digital Studios, created the computer-generated flying saucers, death rays, photo-realistic global destruction, and atmospheric scenes. Michael Fink, vice president of Warner Digital and senior visual



The Martian Ambassador is welcomed to Congress in Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!*

© 1996 Warner Bros.



Martians studying life on Earth in Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!*.

© 1996 Warner Bros.

effects supervisor on *Mars Attacks!* is no stranger to this type of work. His previous experience includes directing the famous 1993 *Polar Bear* commercial spot for Coca-Cola and Tim Burton's *Batman Returns*. In working on the production design, Fink and his team watched all of Burton's films to bring his signature style to their work. "We really studied *Edward Scissorhands* and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, because there are things in the way those characters move and in the design of them that carry through

to our animation," notes Fink.

In all, the film contains some 120 computer-generated shots. However much of an avid stop-motion fan I am, I admit that I can't imagine how much of the visuals in the film could have been pulled off without at least the aid of computer animation. After production was completed, Burton commented that, "At the root of it, animation is animation. Each form requires its own special set of circumstances and expertise." Maybe so, but it seems a great injustice that there is

no mention of Barry Purves' work in the "Mars Attacks!" credit roll or even in the otherwise excellent Ballantine book, *The Art of Mars Attacks!*, by Karen R. Jones, in which Mackinnon and Saunders' contributions are celebrated. Well, as they say, "That's Hollywood!"

Mars Attacks! (Warner Bros.) Director-Producer: Tim Burton. Producer: Larry Franco. Screenplay: Jonathan Gems. Music: Danny Elfman. Animation & Special Effects: Industrial Light & Magic. Visual Effects Supervisor (Martian Character Sequences): Jim Mitchell. Cast: Jack Nicholson, Glen Close, Annette Bening, Pierce Brosnan, Danny DeVito, Martin Short, Sarah Jessica Parker, Michael J. Fox, Rod Steiger, Tom Jones, Lukas Haas, Natalie Portman, Jim Brown, Lisa Marie, Sylvia Sidney, Paul Winfield & Pam Grier.



Models used for Martians in Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!*, from *Mars Attacks! The Art of the Movie* by Karen R. Jones, © 1996 Warner Bros.

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

Il Paese degli animali (Animaland)

Video Review

by Giannalberto Bendazzi

In the 1970s and 80s, anyone researching the history of classical American animation was faced with a panorama of numerous producers, directors and artists who were still alive and more than ready to tell of their experience; in addition, there were surviving friends, acquaintances and relatives, as well as earlier interviews. The only real mystery surrounded David Hand.

Hand had been Disney's right hand man on the creative side for about 10 years. He was credited as the director on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Bambi*; he then emigrated to Great Britain to set up a large studio there. But after that? Nothing. He reappeared one evening, shortly before his death, to collect an Annie Award from ASIFA-Hollywood, a branch of the professional animators organization, for his lifetime achievements. He did leave a small book of memoirs which were published posthumously on her own by his widow, Martha, and which only a few of us were lucky enough to get our hands on one. Now, precisely 10 years after his death (he was born in 1900), thanks to a lucky combination of chance and the clever intervention of an Italian company, the films he made in Great Britain have once again come to light.

But let's start at the beginning. After gaining some experience in New York at the John Randolph

Bray Studios, David Dodd Hand first came to Disney on January 20, 1930, a Friday. That was the day his difficult, contradictory but creative relationship with Walt (who, in the words of many studio veterans interviewed later on was, to put it mildly, "a very complicated man")

Hand exaggerated all the positions purely to be polemical, making them completely unnatural by contemporary standards. "There you are, Dave, that is exactly what I wanted!" exclaimed "Mickey Mouse's father" before his amazed artist. This was to become a lesson



Ginger Nutt's Bee Brother, an *Animaland* film directed by Bert Feldstead.

© G.B.Animation. Courtesy of Streamline Pictures.

began. Hand tells us that one of his boss' greatest problems was his inability to explain just exactly what he meant: he knew what he did not like, but did not know how to explain what changes needed to be made. Once, he made him redo a scene six times until, enraged,

on *animated cartoons* (to make a scene cinematically credible, never imitate reality, but caricature it instead and then carry it to excess), and also a lesson for Hand, who from that moment on was able to anticipate the taste and wishes of Walt Disney better than anyone



Ginger Nutt's Bee Brother, an Animaland film directed by Bert Feldstead.

© G.B.Animation. Courtesy of Streamline Pictures.

else.

The British Adventure

On July 21, 1944, after the glory

Hand tells us that one of Disney's greatest problems was his inability to explain just exactly what he meant.

of *Snow White* and *Bambi*, Hand resigned. Marc Eliot, a real backbiter (as seen in *Walt Disney, Hollywood's Dark Prince*, the most hostile of Disney's biographers), suggests that the boss, a callous moralist, had begun to detest his employee when he had gone to live with a new companion before his divorce had been finalized. Hand is vague, in his memoirs, and describes a confidence which had deteriorated bit by bit, an atmosphere which had imperceptibly become unbearable. In fact, one might believe that he had almost begun to get in the way. Fond and loyal, but definitely not a yes man, he had grown professionally, until he had become not only Disney's right hand man, but almost his alter ego, a potential menace for a ruler who wished to be absolute.

Thus his British adventure began. Hired by J. Arthur Rank, David Hand established GB Animation. He fitted out luxurious premises in the countryside just outside London, amongst all the difficulties of the post-war period. He trained a couple of hundred artist and produced 9 episodes

of the Animaland series and 10 of the Musical Paintbox series. The experience was ended by the protectionism of the American market, which refused to buy the British shorts.

In 1950, Hand returned to his motherland and left animation forever. He went to live in Colorado Springs and, later, in the small California town of Cambria; he mar-

ried twice more and died in 1986. Here too, his memoirs are reticent. Why did he not attempt to set up a new studio at a time when animated commercials was starting to boom and promised sure economic rewards? Why didn't he offer his services to one of the numerous producers still active, starting with his friend Walter Lantz, or Warner Bros., which was still flourishing? Reading between the lines of his autobiography, a picture emerges of a man who, at the age of 50, was fed up: he had touched the apex of his field, he had exhausted all his energy in an attempt to become an industrialist on his own account, and finally only wanted to enjoy family life and peace. However, to get an answer to these questions, we will have to wait for more research to be done by new historians.

The Good News

Now let us get to the good news, which led us to honor this underappreciated master. His British



A Fantasy on London, a Musical Paintbox short directed by Pat Griffin

© G.B.Animation. Courtesy of Streamline Pictures.



David D. Hand when he was Managing Director and Production Supervisor of Gaumont British Animation. Courtesy of Giannalberto Bendazzi.

films have been recovered and have been reissued in grand style on video, rather than via a retrospective in a remote festival. As often happens, it all happened quite by chance.

Ken Kramer is the owner of the Clip Joint in California, a company which collects old films and acts as an advertising warehouse. One fine day, the cleaning man at an old warehouse approached him with a box full of some very old 35mm Technicolor prints; Kramer sent the man packing with a few dollars, mostly to keep him happy. He was thus quite taken aback when director Joe Dante (of

Gremlins fame) happened along and saw the films, and recognized them as being by David Hand. Kramer then got in touch with the filmmakers' son, David Hale Hand, and together they planned to restore the films and their commercial rerelease. But who could finance such a project?

From this point on, the story also becomes part of Italian animation history. Luigi Affaba and Carlo Fei, the Milanese owners of Alfadedis, a home video production company specializing in animation, also happened to be in California. Kramer and Hand Jr. had already heard of them and started pursuing them and an agreement was reached: Alfadedis would finance the restoration and, in return, would acquire the video rights to the films. This was quite a risk for the two Italians, who had only seen a part of the material and for the most part just relied on their instincts.

Now the *Animaland* video (/*Il Paese degli animali* in Italian) is a



Clean Up Model Sheet for G.B. Animation short. © 1948 G.B. Animation. Courtesy of Giannalberto Bendazzi.

reality, dubbed into Italian by the multitalented actor Luca Barbareschi. What can be said of it? That these are brilliant fairy tales

about animals interspersed with musical interludes, which reminds one of Disney's *Silly Symphonies* from the 1930s, but without the affection sometimes found in the originals. There is also the surprising anticipation of the stylized and simplified manner of the UPA films of the 1950s; for instance, look at *The Ostrich*, with its animated Egyptian hieroglyphics.

There is also the surprising anticipation of the stylized and simplified manner of the UPA films of the 1950s.

Despite the heavy stylistic influence of Hollywood, the *Animaland* films represent an important part of the history of West European animation, the product of its first large scale studio and the first to use the Disney model, in its authentic form. Amongst the animators trained by Hand, at least one, Nicholas Spargo, was later to become a master of London animated commercials, and John Wilson had fruitful career in the United States, highlighted by the *Shinbone Alley* feature.

Il Paese degli animali (Animaland). A videocassette of nine shorts for children by David Dodd Hand. Edited by Ken Kramer and David Hale Hand. Produced by Alfadedis. Voices by Luca Barbareschi. Release date: December 4, 1996.

Editor's Note: In 1992, Los Angeles-based Streamline Pictures did release a video containing four of David Hand's British films under the title *David Hand's Animaland*. It included three of the *Animaland* and one of the *Musical Paintbox* series. The tape is now out of print, but Streamline is said to be in line to release the Alfadedis series in the United States.

Il Paese degli animali

Video Review

di Giannalberto Bendazzi

Per chi, negli anni Settanta-Ottanta, faceva ricerche sulla storia dell'animazione americana classica, il panorama era fatto di numerosi produttori, registi, disegnatori ancora viventi e pronti a raccontare le loro esperienze, o di amici, conoscenti, parenti superstizi, o di interviste precedenti. L'unico mistero riguardava David Hand. Era stato per una decina d'anni il numero due artistico della Disney, aveva firmato la regia del mitico *Biancaneve e i sette nani* e di *Bambi*, era emigrato in Gran Bretagna per fondare qui una grand casa di produzione. Ma oltre a questo? Il nulla. Ricomparve una sera per ritirare un Annie Award alla carriera, assegnatogli dall'associazione degli animatori californiani Asifa-Hollywood, poco prima di morire, Postumo, ha lasciato un libriccino di memorie (sarebbe meglio dire appunti autobiografici) pubblicato in proprio dalla vedova Martha, su cui in pochissimi abbiamo avuto la fortuna di mettere le mani. E ora, giusto dieci anni dopo la sua scomparsa (era nato nel 1900), tornano alla luce, per una fortunata combinazione di caso e di intelligente intervento di una casa produttrice italiana, i suoi film girati in Gran Bretagna.

Ma andiamo con ordine. Dopo essersi fatto le ossa a New York presso la casa di produzione di

John Randolph Bray, David Dodd Hand approdò alla Disney il 20 gennaio 1930, un venerdì. Da quel giorno cominciò la sua relazione difficile, contraddittoria ma creativa con Walt (il quale, nelle parole unanimi di tutti gli altri veterani dello studio più tardi intervistati, era, a dir poco, *"a very complicated man"*).

polemica tutte le posizioni, in un modo che secondo gli standard dell'epoca era completamente innaturale. "Ecco. Dave, è esattamente quallo che volevo!", esclamò il "papà di Topolino" davanti al suo sbigottito artista. Questa doveva diventare una lezione sull'*animated cartoon* (per rendere cinematograficamente



Ginger Nutt's Bee Brother, an *Animaland* film directed by Bert Feldstead.
© G.B. Animation. Courtesy of Streamline Pictures.

Racconta Hand che uno dei grandi problemi del suo boss era l'incapacità di spiegarsi: sapeva che cosa non gli piaceva ma non sapeva suggerire le correzioni. Una volta lo obbligò a rifare una scena sei volte, finché egli, furibondo, esagerò per

credibile una scena, mai imitare la reità, ma caricaturalarla e quindi portarla all'eccesso) e anche una lezione per David Hand, il quale da allora seppe anticipare i gusti e i voleri di Walt Disney meglio di chiunque altro.



Ginger Nutt's Bee Brother, an Animaland film directed by Bert Feldstead.

© G.B.Animation. Courtesy of Streamline Pictures.

Il 21 luglio 1944, dopo la gloria di *Biancaneve* e di *Bambi*, Hand diede le dimissioni. Quella malalingua di Marc Elliot (il più ostile dei biografi di Disney, autore di *Walt Disney, Hollywood's Dark Prince*) suggerisce che il capo, moralista incallito, avesse cominciato a detestare il suo collaboratore quando questi era andato a vivere con una nuova compagna prima ancora che il divorzio dalla moglie fosse pronunciato. Nelle sue memorie, Hand è sfumato, e descrive una fiducia man mano deteriorata, un'atmosfera insensibilmente fattasi irrespirabile. Di fatto, c'è da credere che egli fosse diventato ingombra. Affezionato e leale, ma certamente non uno *yes man*, egli era cresciuto professionalmente fino a diventare non solo un braccio destro, ma addirittura un alter ego, una potenziale minaccia per un monarca che si voleva assoluto.

Cominciò allora l'avventura inglese. Ingaggiato dalla Rank, David Hand fondò la GB Animation,

attrezzò una sontuosa sede nella campagna londinese in mezzo a tutte le difficoltà del dopoguerra, addestrò un paio di centinaia di disegnatori, e produsse 9 episodi della serie "Animaland" e 10 della serie

"Musical Paintbox." L'esperienza fu chiusa dal protezionismo del mercato americano, che rifiutò di acquistare i cortometraggi britannici. Nel 1950 Hand ritornò in patria e lasciò per sempre l'animazione. Visse a Colorado Springs e poi nella piccola città californiana di Cambria, si sposò altre due volte, Morì nel 1986.

Anche qui, le sue memorie sono reticenti. Perché non tentò di costituire un nuovo studio, proprio in un'epoca in cui la pubblicità a disegni animati stava diventando richiestissima e prometteva uno sbocco economico sicuro? Perché non si offrì a uno dei numerosi produttori dell'epoca, da Walter Lantz che era suo amico alla Warner Bros. che era ancora fiorente? Fra le righe della sua autobiografia si legge il ritratto di un uomo che, giunto a varcare i cinquant'anni, ne ha abbastanza: ha toccato il vertice nel suo settore, ha esaurito le energie nel tentativo di diventare industriale in proprio, e finalmente desidera solo godersi la famiglia e la quiete. Ma



A Fantasy on London, a Musical Paintbox short directed by Pat Griffin

© G.B.Animation. Courtesy of Streamline Pictures.



David D. Hand when he was Managing Director and Production Supervisor of Gaumont British Animation. Courtesy of Giannalberto Bendazzi.

per le risposte precise occorrerà aspettare le ricerche di nuovi storografi.

E ora eccoci alle buone notizie, quelle che ci hanno dato lo spunto per rievocare questo maestro misconosciuto. I suoi film inglesi sono stati recuperati, e per di più ora escono di nuovo a vele spiegate, in videocassetta anziché in qualche remota retrospettiva di un festival specializzato. Come spesso accade, tutto è nato dal caso. Ken Kramer è titolare in California della Clip Joint, un'azienda che raccolgono vecchi film e serve come archivio per la pubblicità. Un bel giorno gli si presenta il ragazzo delle pulizie di un vecchio magazzino, che gli offre uno scatolone di arcaiche bobine Technicolor a 35 mm; Kramer lo sbriga via con pochi dollari, tanto per accontentarlo. Resta di stucco quando un visitatore occasionale, il regista Joe Dante (quello di *Gremlins*), visiona il materiale e riconosce l'impronta di David Hand. Kramer si mette in contatto con il figlio del cineasta, David Hale Hand, e insieme fanno un progetto di restauro e di rilancio

commerciale. Ma chi può pensare al finanziamento? Qui diventa storia anche di casa nostra. Sono in California i milanesi Luigi Affaba e Carlo Fei, titolari dell'Alfadedis, una casa produttrice di homevideo specializzata nell'animazione. Kramer e Hand Jr. conoscono i due per fama, li rincorrono, trovano con loro un accordo. Alfadedis finanzierà il restauro e in contropartita acquisira il diritto alla versione in videocassetta dei film. Con un bel rischio d'impresa da parte dei due italiani, che hanno visionato solo una parte del materiale e per il resto si sono fidati dell'istinto.

Ora la cassetta di *Animaland* (in italiano *Il Paese degli animali*) è una realtà, con il doppiaggio del proteiforme Luca Barbareschi. Che dirne? Che sono brillanti vicende fiabesche di animali condite da intermezzi musicali, che danno l'impressione di *Silly Symphonies* disneiane degli anni Trenta ma senza quella leziosità che talvolta in quelle faceva capolino. Vi si trova anche la sorprendente anticipazione della "maniera" stilizzata ed essenziale degli anni Cinquanta: si veda

l'episodio *The Ostrich*, con l'animazione dei geroglifici egizi. Nonostante la sua impronta hollywoodiana, *Animaland* costituisce un "pezzo" importante per la storia dell'animazione europea occidentale, il risultato del primo grande studio di produzione e primo a importare sul nostro suolo la lezione disneiana nella sua accezione autentica. Fra gli animatori addestrati da Hand almeno uno, Nicholas Spargo, era poi destinato a diventare un maestro dell'animazione pubblicitaria londinese, mentre John Wilson acquisì celebrità in America con varie produzioni fruendo il lungometraggio *Shinbone Alley*. E per l'Italia, si tratta di una prima visione.

Il Paese degli animali, videocassetta di 9 cortometraggi per bambini di David Dodd Hand. A cura di Ken Kramer e David Hale Hand. Produzione Alfadedis, Milano. Voci di Luca Barbareschi. In distribuzione dal 4 dicembre.



Clean Up Model Sheet for G.B. Animation short. © 1948 G.B. Animation. Courtesy of Giannalberto Bendazzi.

Desert Island Series . . .

Festive Festivalers Make Their Picks

Compiled by Harvey Deneroff

Herein are the various picks of what films and other cultural artifacts four present and former animation festival directors would take along with them to a desert island: Tom Knott (former director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival), Gigi Hu (co-founder and co-director of Singapore's Animation Fiesta), Chris Robinson (current director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival) and Philippe Moins (founder and current co-director of the Brussels Animation Festival). They are also joined by *Beavis and Butt-head Do America*'s animation director, Yvette Kaplan.

Philippe Moins' . . .

Here are my choices for the holidays on the moon:

I could say *Le Cuirassé Potemkine* (*Potemkin*), *Les Enfants du Paradis* (*Children of Paradise*), *Citizen Kane* and *Mars Attacks!* to emphasize my cultural background. But for this selection, and for the beginning of a new year (hoping better than this one in Belgium), I prefer to give a list of films without any pretension.

1. *9 secondi e mezzo* by Vincenzo Gioianola.
2. *Early Bird* by Peter Lord and David Sproxton
3. *Gertie the Dinosaur* by Winsor McCay
4. *Trainspotting* by Jeff Newitt
5. *Les Shadoks* by Jacques Rouxel
6. All the first *Felix the Cat* films.
7. The five first minutes of *Time Bandits* by Terry Gilliam.
8. *An Inside Job* by Aidan Hickey
9. *George and Rosemary* by Alison Snowden & David Fine
10. *Stalker* by Andrei Tarkovsky, especially first 10 minutes.

Tom Knott's baker's dozen . . .

Crac by Frédéric Back

Dumbo by Ben Sharpstein

Begone Dull Care by Norman McLaren

One of Joanna Priestly's films. I couldn't decide which one, as they are all good.

The Thief and the Cobbler in Richard Williams version. The greatest animated feature ever made and never seen.

The Sweater by Sheldon Cohen

*Adventures of ** by John Hubley

Gerald McBoing Boing by John Hubley

Feed The Kitty by Chuck Jones

The Snowman by Diane Jackson

Creature Comforts by Nick Park

Tango by Zbigniew Rybczinski

The Simpsons: Last Exit to Springfield by Mark Kirkland (the episode with Homer as the head of the union).



Gigi Hu's picks . . .

These came to my mind within a minute or so when I first saw your email. I decided to stick to it:

1. *The Fish and the Monk* by Michael Dudok de Wit, for its simplicity, music and movement synchronization.
2. *Song of the Exile*. Ann Hui's film about relationship with parents/grandparents, very personal.
3. *World Apartment Horror* by Katsuhiro Otomo, for its multicultural storyline and the anime touch.
4. Excerpts from *Sleeping Beauty*, especially the magic in the air.
5. Some haunting Mongolian songs—love of the land, the open space and the steppes.
6. Shanghai Animation Studio productions—Chinese watercolor paintings coming alive.
7. *No Problem* by Craig Welsch. A wacky animation piece.
8. *Seven Samurai* by Akira Kurosawa. The sheer length, black and white, such storytelling . . .
9. Learning to play Saint-Saëns' piano piece, *The Swan*, by heart.
10. Some Scottish Ceilidh music—for the twirl and whirl, friendship spirit . . .



Chris Robinson's . . .

In no particular order:

1895 by Priit Parn & Janno Poldma.
The Sweater by Sheldon Cohen)
Dino, the masterful biography of Dean Martin by Nick Tosches.
Kiss Me Stupid by Billy Wilder.
Bimbo's Initiation by Dave Fleischer.
Drunken Master 2 by Jackie Chan.
1978 National Hockey League semi-final game between Montreal and Boston.
Cops by Buster Keaton.
The Simpsons, particularly the episode where Homer becomes union kingpin (*Last Exit to Springfield* by Mark Kirkland).

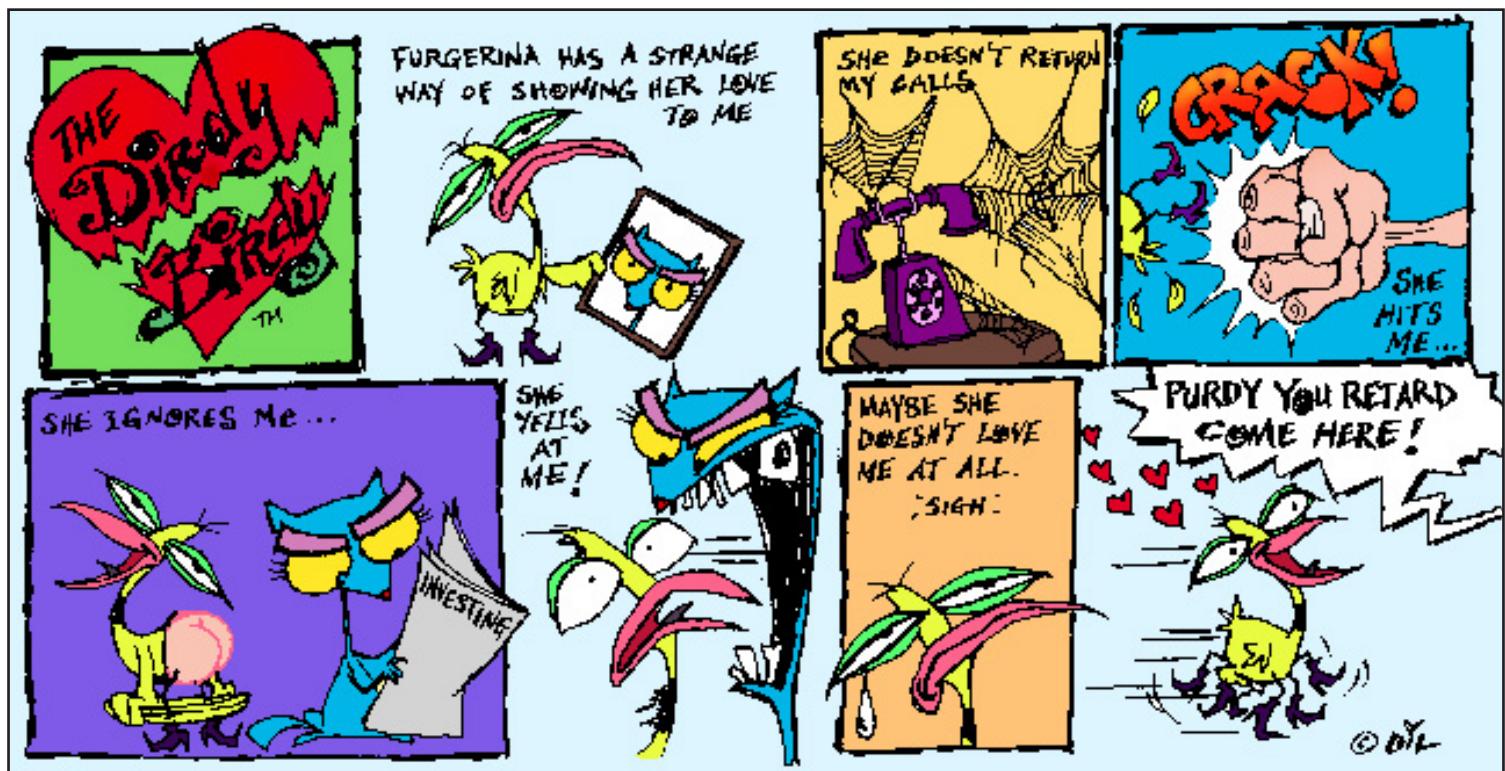
Yvette Kaplan's . . .

I love *Beavis and Butt-head*. They make me laugh. They made me laugh when I first saw Mike Judge's film, *Frog Baseball* three-and-a-half years ago and they *still* make me laugh.

My biggest desire in working on *Beavis and Butt-head Do America* was that people who for one reason or another never understood the show would get out there and see that, "Hey! I get it! These are two really dumb guys. Two really *funny* dumb guys. Two really dumb, funny, *innocent* guys." And they'd laugh. I think we did it, and I'm really proud and really happy about it.

1. *Amarcord* by Federico Fellini.
2. *Cinderfella* (Jerry Lewis) by Frank Tashlin.
3. *Adventures of an * by John & Faith Hubley.*
4. *Angels With Dirty Faces* by Michael Curtiz, with James Cagney.
5. *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger.
6. *The Wizard of Oz* by Victor Fleming.
7. *One Touch of Venus* with Robert Walker & Ava Gardner.
8. *A Thousand Clowns* with Jason Roberts, Jr.
9. *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol* by Abe Levitow.
10. *Gigi* by Vincente Minnelli, with Leslie Caron & Louis Jordan.

AWN Comics



The Dirdy Birdy
by John R. Dilworth



NEWS

UN Copyright Conference Agrees on Two Treaties. The three-week Geneva-based conference hosted by the UN's World Intellectual Property Organization ended December 20 with an agreement by 160 countries on two of three proposed treaties. The treaties, which have to be ratified by the governments of the participating countries, are the first attempt to revise international copyright law in 25 years and deal with some of the new problems posed by such new technologies as the Internet. The agreements are intended to broaden protection for copyright holders, thus encouraging use of the Internet to distribute their product. Bruce Lehman, the US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, claimed that the treaties "will be the cornerstone of international economic law for the information and technological age of the 21st century."

One contentious aspect of the treaties held that even the making of temporary computer copies of material would have violated copyright law, but it was eliminated at the last minute. A third treaty, which dealt with databases, had been unsuccessfully put forth by the US delegation, even though it lacked support in the US Congress.

FCC Approves Digital Broadcast Standards. As expected, on December 26, 1997, the Federal Communications Commission approved the new standards worked out by various groups representing broadcasters, the computer industry, and consumer elec-



tronics manufacturers. The standards pave the way for the coming of high definition television (HDTV) broadcasting, which conceivably could appear as early as 1998, though this is thought unlikely. Conventional wisdom seems to indicate that TV sets will increasingly be built in a widescreen format. One wonders, how TV shows designed for the current aspect ratio will ultimately be handled; back in the early 1950s, when widescreen formats became all the rage, older films invariably were shown with the tops and/or bottoms of their pictures cut off. The coalition of Hollywood creative personnel, led by Steven Spielberg, unsuccessfully lobbied for standards which would have curtailed this sort of practice (as well as diminished the pan and scan tactics used when widescreen films are broadcast today), but were left behind when their brief alliance with the computer industry broke down.

Beavis and Butt-head Do America Sets Box Office Record in Opening Weekend. The MTV/Geffen animated feature,

directed by Mike Judge, took in \$20.1 million for its opening weekend in the US and Canada, the largest take for a non-sequel opening in December. The numbers seemed to have surprised almost everyone in the industry, including distributor Paramount Pictures. Given the film's relatively low budget (estimated to be between \$10 and \$13 million), the film will almost certainly become profitable in fairly short order, even if its popularity wanes in the coming weeks; in fact, it could even provide a greater return on investment than the much higher budgeted *Space Jam* and outdo the equally high cost *Mars Attacks!* in gross receipts.

Perhaps the greatest significance of the film's surprise financial success, is that it is the first American animated feature aimed at something other than a family audience to do well since the heyday of Ralph Bakshi (*Fritz the Cat*). It also signifies the return of New York as an important regional production center for theatrical film. The city which was once home to such cartoon stars as Felix the Cat, Betty Boop, Popeye and Mighty Mouse, and such studios as Fleischer and Terrytoons, has been enjoying a renaissance of late, thanks in large part to the recent animation boom and the efforts of MTV Networks, whose Nickelodeon and MTV cable TV divisions have funded a number of New York productions. The largest local employer, though, has been MTV Animation, which initially got into business to make the *Beavis and Butt-head* TV series. The next animated feature to be made in

Gotham could be a version of *The Stinky Cheese Man*, now in development at Nickelodeon Movies.

Colossal Pictures Takes On Brooks McChesney as President & Chief Executive Office. The appointment, who had been executive vice president and chief operating officer at IVN Communications, a -based producer and distributor, will take over the reins at the troubled San Francisco studio, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last May. At the same time, Colossal co-founder Drew Takahashi now becomes the company's chief creative officer and chairman. The hope is that McChesney's appointment will take the company, which had once been one of the largest commercial houses in the US and an innovative producer of such animated TV series as *Liquid Television* and *Aeon Flux*, will now be able to come out of bankruptcy. The studio still does commercials on a more limited basis and has expanded into the Web design business. Once the major Bay Area animation house, it has since been eclipsed by companies such as Pixar, Twitching Image and Wild Brain.

16th Brussels Cartoon and Animated Film Festival, February 4-16, 1997. The 13-day event will show no than 14 new features and over 100 shorts, along special guests from France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany, the US and Belgium. The festival opens with two live-action/animated features: Steve Barron's *The Adventures of Pinocchio* and Joe Pytka's *Space Jam*. Other features include Enzo d'Alòs *The Blue Arrow*, John Coates' *The Wind in the Willows*, and Laila Hodelle's puppet film, *The Ballad of Holger the Dane*. Mike Judge's

Beavis and Butt-head Do America and *Werner II*, from Germany, are also possibilities. Britains Sarah Ann Kennedy will talk about her TV series, *Crapston Villas*, while the Aaargh! Studio will present a program of shorts featuring *Gogs*. On the computer animation front, there will be programs highlighting the work of such studios as Ubisoft, Industrial Light and Magic and Medialab. There will also include the best of international animation over the last year, as well as exhibitions on animation pioneer Emile Cohl, CD-ROMS, plasticine characters in films selected for the Brussels Festival, along with creative workshops for children. For further details check out the Folioscope/Brussels Festival home page.

World Animation Celebration Debuts March 24-30. The multi-faceted event, featuring a glitzy reincarnation of Expanded Entertainment's Los Angeles Animation Celebration, will be held at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and other nearby facilities; the affair will be done under the aegis of the company's Animation Magazine division. (The magazine got its start as the program book for the old Animation Celebration, which was the only major animation festival in the US.) The Celebration claims that it will have "over 1,000 screenings of both premieres and classics of animation and anime . . . competitions for features, shorts, screenwriting and original character development with over \$150,000 in prize money." In addition to the Los Angeles Animation Celebration, the event will include the New Animation Technology Exhibition (featuring the latest in hardware and software) and ASIFA-Hollywood's Animation

Opportunities Expo (the industry's premiere job fair); the latter event will also include Women in Animation's Animation Industry Seminars. The event is the brain-child of Terry Thoren, who is the publisher of Animation Magazine as well as president and chief executive officer of Klasky Csupo. For further information, including competition registration and event schedules, contact the World Animation Celebration, 30101 Agoura Court, Suite 110, Agoura, CA 91301 USA, (818) 991-2884, or at *Animag@aol.com*.

Emily Hubley's Her Grandmother's Gift Wins at 30th New York Exposition of Short Film and Video. This and other awards will be presented to the winners of the competition in conjunction with their screening at the Donnell branch of the New York Public Library, January 9, 16 and 23. Admission is free.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame Gets Golden Globe Nomination. Composer Alan Menken received the nod in the category of Original Score—Motion Picture. This was the only animated production to receive a nomination this year. (Disneys animated feature often get nominated in the Motion Picture—Musical or Comedy and the Original Song—Motion Picture categories.) The awards, which cover both movies and television, are presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and are often seen as a preview of the Academy Awards. The winners will be announced at the 54th annual awards show in Beverly Hills on January 19.

Westwood Studios Releases Macintosh Version of Command

and Conquer for DOS. The game, which has sold over 1.2 million units, the company maintains keeps all the features of the original version, while adding SVGA graphics and improved Internet capabilities. It has a suggested retail price in the US of \$59.99.

The following items are from AWN's December 7, 1996 Email News Flash:

Chapman University To Host Symposium on Film Preservation and SAS Conference. The Southern California university's School of Film and Television has put out a call for papers, pre-constituted panels and workshops for the one-day event to take place on April 19, 1997, with proposals due in by January 15, 1997.

The School will also play host to the 10th annual Society for Animation Studies Conference in August 1998. This 10 day conference will "feature workshops, panels, screenings, demonstrations, scholarly papers, and other events covering a full-spectrum of animation-and motion-picture-related topics. Included materials will cover areas from pre-cinema devices (optical toys, magic lanterns, and so forth) to the latest in new technologies. A call for papers, pre-constituted panels and workshops will be distributed in Fall 1997." For more information on either event, or to be placed on the mailing list, contact: Dr. Maureen Furniss, School of Film and Television, Chapman University, 333 N. Glassell St., Orange, CA 92866; phone: (714) 744-7018; fax: (714) 997-6700; email: furniss@chapman.edu.

Paramount to Debut New

Rugrats Episode on Home Video: The episode of the popular show, produced by Klasky Csupo, will be released by Paramount Home Video in July 1997, about eight weeks before it airs on Nickelodeon. The special, which tells of a visit to Las Vegas, is the second of three planned for the current season—the others being this year's Hanukkah special and one due for Mother's Day 1997. The series is also being developed into an animated feature under the Nicktoons Movie banner, which will be released through Paramount. (Both Nickelodeon and Paramount are divisions of Viacom.)

MCA Buys Into Bagdasarian for Chipmunks Rights: MCA, Inc. has signed an agreement that will last a minimum of 10 years with Bagdasarian Productions for rights to use the Chipmunks characters for its various activities, ranging from theme parks and licensing to new projects. The deal includes distribution rights to the several TV series, specials, home videos and *The Chipmunk Adventure* animated feature. MCA is the parent company of Universal City Studios, which has several theme parks, as well as housing the Universal Cartoon Studios. Bagdasarian, headed by Chipmunks' creator David Seville, is now based in Santa Barbara, California.

DreamWorks Signs First-Look Deal With Vanguard: Vanguard Films, headed by John Williams, is now developing an animated feature based on William Steig's children's book, *Shrek*, with a screenplay being written by Ted Elliot and Terry Rossio (*Aladdin*). Also in the works is *Galaxy High School 2000*, a live-action comedy based on the TMS (Tokyo Movie Shinsha) ani-

mated series created by Chris Columbus (now known for directing such films as *Home Alone* and *Mrs. Doubtfire*), who is in negotiations to direct and co-produce the film.

The following items are from AWN's December 21, 1996 Email News Flash:

London International Advertising Awards Announced.

The winners in animation-related categories are:

- Animation—Cel: Levi's for Women, *Variations on a Theme*, Susan Young, London. Director/Animator: Susan Young.
- Animation—Computer: Mercedes-Benz, *Rhinos*, Bruce Dowad Associates, Hollywood. Director: Bruce Dowad.
- Animation—Stop Frame: Mitsubishi Trucks, *Techno Sumo*, Anifex, Adelaide, Australia. Director: Michael Cusak.

NICKELODEON INCREASES DOMINATION OF US KIDS AUDIENCE.

Nielsen ratings released by the cable network this past week were used to back up its claim that it controls 57% of the viewing time for children aged 2-11. With the exception of the Cartoon Network, whose penetration in the American market is comparatively minimal, no other network or station can match its 103.5 hours of kids programming. (In comparison, other networks run anywhere from 5 to 20 hours a week.) The ratings also indicate that Nickelodeon's viewership is up 15% for the 1996-97 season so far versus an 18% decline for its rivals. They also claim to have 40 of the top 50 shows and 78 of the top 100 among children 2-11. The figures

are even more impressive when one realizes that it is available in only 71% of American TV households, which is much less than the major broadcast networks. With Nickelodeon expanding its childrens programming, including new Nicktoons, into the evening hours, its position can only get stronger over the short term. This dominance has led CBS to abandon its long-standing commitment to Saturday morning animation in favor of programming aimed at older kids.

DreamWorks' Invasion America Prime-Time Series Set For WB Network in 1998. The show, created by Stephen Spielberg and executive produced by *Star Trek* veteran producer-screenwriter Harve Bennett, will be the first show made by DreamWorks Television Animation. The show concerns the adventures of a 16-year-old Earth boy who is half alien and who leads the planet's defense against invaders from the planet Tyrus. It will feature the voice talents of Leonard Nimoy, Kristy McNichol, Edward Albert and Tate Donovan.

Alan Spencer and Corky Quackenbush Team To Do Prime Time Puppet Series on Fox. The Fox network, the only terrestrial network with a strong commitment to prime time animation (*The Simpsons* and Mike Judge's forthcoming *King of the Hill*) has put a new, though untitled series to be animated by Quackenbush, whose shorts are one of the highlights of Fox's *Mad TV* show. Spencer, who is best known for his late-1980s *Sledge Hammer* comedy series, will act as executive producer along with Quackenbush and 3 Arts Entertainments Howard Klein. The series centers around a teenag-

er and, according to Spencer, is "a coming-of-age story in the tradition of *Summer of '42*, *Catcher in the Rye* and *The Omen*.

Rick Rich to Direct Animated *The King and I* For Morgan Creek. The adaptation of the Rogers & Hammerstein musical had been first optioned to be made into an animated feature by Rankin/Bass Productions, who will co-produce the film with Morgan Creek and will be released by Warner Bros., which brokered the deal. Morgan Creek is no stranger to theatrical animation, having included an animated sequence by Chuck Jones in its 1992 comedy, *Stay Tuned*. The film is to be produced by Morgan Creek's James Robinson, Rankin/Bass' Arthur Rankin, and Peter Bakalian, who co-authored the screen adaptation with Jacqueline Feather and David Seidler. Rankin/Bass is best known for such TV specials as *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*, but also ventured into animated theatrical features with *The Last Unicorn*. Rick Rich is best known as director of *The Swan Princess*, the feature produced by his company Rich Animation, which will apparently handle the animation production

Universal to Do Direct-to-Video Versions of *Hercules* and *Xena*. Universal Studios Home Video plans to make animated feature-length versions of two of its TV series: *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*. *Hercules* is due out in fall 1997 and will feature the voices of the actors in the series, including Kevin Sorbo and Lucy Lawless, and will also include three original songs. Universal Cartoon Studios will handle production chores, which also made the labels highly successful

feature-length sequels to Don Bluth's *The Land Before Time*. The animated version of *Hercules*, one assumes, is being timed to cash in on the publicity generated by Disney's summer release of *Hercules*.

Success of *101 Dalmations* Helps Sales of New Tv Series. The animated show, which Buena Vista Television will release 65 episodes into the US syndication market, which has already been cleared in more than 85% of the country. The TV series is the first product of Disney's alliance with cereal manufacturer Kellogg Co., to which Kellogg has committed advertising money. The alliance was in part due to pressures on the syndication market, as fewer time slots are available on independent stations, many of which have opted to program animation from the nascent WB and UPN networks. Even with the Disney and Kellogg's marketing machine behind it, the *101 Dalmatians* TV show is having to settle for less desirable time slots than the Mouse House usually got in the past.

Cartoon Network Shorts Go Theatrical. The cable network is teaming up with General Cinema, a major theater chain, and Kraft Foods to provide 20 minutes of Cartoon Network programming, including a World Premiere Cartoon. The material will be part of General Cinemas Saturday morning screenings of feature-length family films.

Cinar Films to Increase Production By 34% in 1997. The Montreal-based studio announced that it will increase its spending from C\$42.9 (US\$31.6) million this year to C\$57.5 (US\$42.4) million in

1997. This includes eight animated and four live-action shows, both renewals and new shows. Their new animated TV shows include *The Country Mouse and the City Mouse* (26 episodes, to be co-produced by France Animation in association with Ravensburger Film & TV) and *Dr. Xargle* (a 13 episode comic drama to be done with HTV and King Rolo Films in the UK). The company will also do two series for Teletoon, the all-cartoon cable network which Cinar has an equity interest in: *Caillou* (a series of five-minute vignettes) and *Animal Crackers* (based on Roger Bollen's comic strip).

Ed Jones and Others Leave Cinesite, May Form New Company. The president of the Eastman Kodak-owned effects house quit his job on Friday, December 13, along with four of his top aides: Sharon Berlin, director of human resources, Warren Franklin, chief operating officer, Mitzi Gallagher, vice president of production, and Terry Thurlow, chief financial officer. Jones, who was Cinesite's first employee, gained considerable exposure lately for supervising the marriage of live-action and animation in *Space Jam*. (Some years earlier, he did the same for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*.) The mass exodus seems to be a prelude to Jones' forming his own company. In the meantime, Aidan Foley, the vice president and general manager of Cinesite's Digital Motion Imaging Division will take over as president.

THE INK TANK SIGNS FOUR ARTISTS/FILMMAKERS FOR NEW DIVISION. R.O. Blechmans New York-based studio, known for its TV commercials and specials including the Emmy-winning

L'Histoire du Soldat, has set up a new division, The Ink Tank Too. The new division will feature the talent of independent filmmaker Suzan Pitt (*Asparagus* and *Joy Street*), Maciek Albrecht (*Close to You*), designer and illustrator Santiago Cohen (who has done film work for the Childrens Television Workshop), and New Zealand animator John Robertson (who has done work for MTV). The four will be used for TV and feature projects.

Blechman stated that the four "are true auteurs, [which is] common enough among independent animators, but highly unusual in commercial animation." Although Blechman has often used the graphic styles of many other artists in making films and commercials, he has always closely supervised all the spots made at the studio for the past 20 years. But Blechman felt that, "It was time to bring in fresh blood—new attitudes, different approaches—to supplement mine." In doing so, Blechman seems to be returning, in part, to the original idea behind the studio, which aimed to hook up the talents of a number of artists with clients; however, the idea was abandoned when most ad agencies just seemed to want work done by Blechman using his fabled squiggly line.

VILLAGE ROADSHOW BUYS HALF OF YORAM GROSS FILM STUDIOS. Gross, said to be the largest indigenously-owned animation house in Australia, first made its reputation with its series of Dot feature films, combining animation and live-action. Of late, it has concentrated on television, gaining a measure of international success with its *Blinky Bill* series. The deal, however, will now permit Gross to re-enter the theatrical

arena; at the same time, it will allow Village Roadshow, a major Australian entertainment company, to expand into childrens programming.

Digital Domain to Expand Commercial Operation and Signs Limited Pact With IATSE.

The Venice, California high tech company founded by James Ross, James Cameron and Stan Winston with backing from IBM and Cox Communications, announced that they will expand production of TV commercials. This move, which comes at a time when a number of other CGI/special effects studios are withdrawing from this arena, will entail moving their commercial operations into larger, separate facilities. In addition, the company is hiring Patrick Davenport (director of special effects at London's The Moving Picture Company) to become Digital Domain's director of digital operations for commercials, and London-based visual effects artist Andy MacDonald (where he has his own company, Chinchilla); both will be moving to California. Finally, Digital Domain will start a special group targeting the automotive industry.

The company has also signed an agreement with the International Alliance of Theatrical & Stage Employees (IATSE) covering non-CGI workers hired on a per project basis. That is, the pact includes the traditional "backlot" live-action personnel, but excludes animators. The Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists, IATSE Local 839, has been attempting to organize digital animators lately with success coming mostly at major studios. (For instance, Sony Pictures is now negotiating a contract with the local for its Imageworks operation, which has set up a character ani-

mation division.) The only major independent CGI house where the animation staff is unionized is Industrial Light & Magic, based in San Rafael, California, which falls under the jurisdiction of IATSE Local 16, in San Francisco.

Animasia and Kennedy Merge to Form Animasia International. Animasia, a Singapore-based studio owned by Wurthelam company, has merged with Manila-based Kennedy Cartoons to form a full-service animation studio to make TV series, feature films, commercials and multimedia projects. The new company is currently doing a pilot for a new series, *Rebel Without a Cause*, a "rock 'n roll comedy" created by Kennedy Cartoons founder Glen Kennedy, a Canadian who once worked at Hanna-Barbera. The new studio is also as doing the animation on the American TV series, *Chucklewood Critters* (Encore Enterprises). The new studio has about 215 people on staff in Manila and 30 in Singapore.

Paul Vester to Join Rhythm & Hues and to Wed Irene Kotlarz. British animator Paul Vester will close his 23-year-old London studio, Speedy Films, by years end to join Los Angeles-based Rhythm & Hues as director of animation, effective February 1, 1997. Rhythm & Hues is one of the top CGI houses in the US and is known for such commercials as the Coca-Cola Polar Bears spots and for its work on such films as *Babe*. Vester's focus will lie primarily in commercials, but will also be available for feature work. He has produced a number of spots for the American market dating back to 1985's classic Hershey's spot, *One of the All-Time Greats*. He was later represented in the US by Andy Arkins Blah Blah Blah, in New York,

through which he forged relationships with such studios as Broadcast Arts and R/Greenberg Associates; more recently he was represented by San Francisco's Colossal Pictures.

Vester apparently will take advantage of his move to the Los Angeles area to wed his long-time companion, Irene Kotlarz, who is best known for her work as director of the Cardiff Animation Festival and its predecessors in Cambridge and Bristol.

ROB COHEN SIGNS WITH ILM FOR COMMERCIALS.

Cohen, director of such major films as Sylvester Stallone's *Daylight*, will now be represented by Industrial Light & Magic Commercial Productions, in San Rafael, California, to do TV spots. His past work with ILM has included the film *Dragonheart*, which featured a computer animated dragon as one of the main characters, as well as on *Daylight*.

BDA to Hold 1st European Conference In Barcelona.

BDA International, an international association of art directors, animators, designers and other design/graphic artists, will hold a two-day design/marketing conference March 3-4, 1997, at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Barcelona, in association with PROMAX. One session, "Animation Art Evolves," will discuss "a creative approach to animation and its use in full-length motion pictures, including the technical process and distribution of digital tools." Panelists include Dan Philips (DreamWorks Feature Animation) and Michael Coldewey (Munich Animation). Registration is US\$495. For further information, contact BDA International, 145 W. 45th St., Suite 1100, New York, NY 10036-4008, telephone: (212) 376-6222, fax:

(376-6202),
bdanel@aol.com.

email:
bdanel@aol.com.

Snow White's Overdue Royalty.

Walt Disney and video distributor Gaumont Buena Vista International have been ordered by a Paris court to pay overdue royalties to Lucie Dolene, who dubbed the title role in Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in French over 30 years ago. Initially, there will be down payment \$20,000 for overdue royalties and \$6,000 because her name did not appear in the film's credits; in addition, a court-appointed expert will determine the exact amount the two companies owe Dolene for video and audio cassettes sold in France and other French-speaking territories..

US Postal Service Selling Animated Video.

The 24-minute tape from Golden Books, *Rudolph, Frosty & Friends Sing Along Video*, apparently based on Rankin/Bass TV specials, is being sold for \$4.99 with the purchase of \$3 worth of Priority Mail. Golden Books has made 5 million copies of the tape available to the Postal Service and is prepared to make another 5 million available if needed.

CF VIDEO OPENS FABLEVISION ANIMATION DIVISION.

The Watertown, Massachusetts multimedia and video production house has opened FableVision Animation Studios, which will be headed by Peter Reynolds. Reynolds had been vice president/creative director at Tom Snyder Productions in Boston. The new division will produce traditional 2D animated for TV, interactive and corporate productions. The new facility will be able to take advantage of CF Video's facilities, which 3D computer animation.

Animation World Magazine

1997 Calendar



The February 1997 issue spotlights "Animation Nations," a look at various national animation industries around the world, focusing on the business of animation. Of especial interest is a report of what's happening in Korean's suddenly burgeoning domestic animation industry, a report on labor relations in France, and an analysis of the state of the American animation industry. In addition, there will be the first of our occasional "Days in the Life of an Animator" series, this time spotlighting Dutch filmmaker Piet Kroon, a report on NATPE Convention in New Orleans, the industry venue where many TV shows are announced, sold and bought, and much, much more.

International Animation Industry

(February)

Children & Animation

(March)

Music & Animation

(April)

Commercials

(May)

Education

(June)